VOCAL MASTERY

HARRIETTE BROWER.

VOCAL MASTERY

To my dear teacher, Maestro F. Daddi, who has been so wonderfully good to me.

Very Gratefully

M. Elizabeth Presto.

Oct-8-1930.

To Miss Harriette Brower
Very sincerely
Enrico Caruso
N. Y. 1919

VOCAL MASTERY

TALKS WITH MASTER SINGERS AND TEACHERS

COMPRISING INTERVIEWS WITH CARUSO, FARRAR, MAUREL, LEHMANN, AND OTHERS

BY

HARRIETTE BROWER

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WITH TWENTY PORTRAITS

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FOREWORD

It has long been a cherished desire to prepare a series of Talks with famous Singers, which should have an equal aim with Talks with Master Pianists, namely, to obtain from the artists their personal ideas concerning their art and its mastery, and, when possible, some inkling as to the methods by which they themselves have arrived at the goal.

There have been unexpected and untold difficulties in the way of such an undertaking. The greater the artist the more numerous the body-guard which surrounds him—or her; the more stringent the watch over the artist's time and movements. If one is able to penetrate this barrier and is permitted to see the artist, one finds usually an affable gentleman, a charming woman, with simple manners and kindly intentions.

However, when one is fortunate enough to come in touch with great singers, one finds it difficult to draw from them a definite idea of the process by which they have achieved vic-

tory. A pianist can describe his manner of tone production, methods of touch, fingering, pedaling; the violinist can discourse on the bow arm, use of left hand, on staccato and pizzicati; but the singer is loath to describe his own instrument. And even if singers could analyze, the description might not fit any case but their own. For the art of singing is an individual art, the perfecting an instrument hidden from sight. Each artist must achieve mastery by overcoming difficulties which beset his own personal path.

Despite these obstacles, every effort has been put forth to induce artists to speak from an educational standpoint. It is hoped the various hints and precepts they have given, may prove of benefit to singers and teachers. Limitations of space prevent the inclusion of many other artists and teachers.

HARRIETTE BROWER.

150 West 80 Street,
New York City.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
FOREWORD		iii
ENRICO CARUSO	The Value of Work	1
GERALDINE FARRAR	The Will to Succeed a Compelling Force	10
VICTOR MAUREL	Mind Is Everything	24
A VISIT TO MME. LILLI LEHMANN		36
AMELITA GALLI-CURCI	Self-teaching the Great Essential	48
GIUSEPPE DE LUCA	Ceaseless Effort Necessary for Artistic Perfection	60
LUISA TETRAZZINI	The Coloratura Voice	70
ANTONIO SCOTTI	Training American Singers for Opera	80
ROSA RAISA	Patience and Perseverance Win Results	88
LOUISE HOMER	The Requirements of a Musical Career	98
GIOVANNI MARTINELLI	"Let Us Have Plenty of Opera in America"	110
ANNA CASE	Inspired Interpretation	118
FLORENCE EASTON	Problems Confronting the Young Singer	127
MARGUERITE D'ALVAREZ	The Message of the Singer	139
MARIA BARRIENTOS	Be Your Own Critic	147
CLAUDIA MUZIO	A Child of the Opera	156
EDWARD JOHNSON (EDOUARDO DI GIOVANNI)	The Evolution of an Opera Star	165
REINALD WERRENRATH	Achieving Success on the Concert Stage	175

Contents

		PAGE
SOPHIE BRASLAU	Making a Career in America	185
MORGAN KINGSTON	The Spiritual Side of the Singer's Art	193
FRIEDA HEMPEL	A Lesson with a Prima Donna	202

WITH THE MASTER TEACHERS

DAVID BISPHAM	The Making of Artist Singers	213
OSCAR SAENGER	Use of Records in Vocal Study	225
HERBERT WITHERSPOON	Memory, Imagination, Analysis	238
YEATMAN GRIFFITH	Causation	249
J. H. DUVAL	Some Secrets of Beautiful Singing	258
THE CODA	A Resumé	266

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Enrico Caruso	*Frontispiece*
Geraldine Farrar	10
Victor Maurel	24
Amelita Galli-Curci	48
Giuseppe de Luca	60
Luisa Tetrazzini	70
Antonio Scotti	80
Rosa Raisa	88
Louise Homer	98
Giovanni Martinelli	110
Anna Case	118
Florence Easton	128
Marguerite d'Alvarez	140
Maria Barrientos	148
Claudia Muzio	156
Edward Johnson	166
Reinald Werrenrath	176
Sophie Braslau	186
Morgan Kingston	194
Frieda Hempel	202

VOCAL MASTERY

I

ENRICO CARUSO

THE VALUE OF WORK

ENRICO CARUSO! The very name itself calls up visions of the greatest operatic tenor of the present generation, to those who have both heard and seen him in some of his many rôles. Or, to those who have only listened to his records, again visions of the wonderful voice, with its penetrating, vibrant, ringing quality, the impassioned delivery, which stamps every note he sings with the hall mark of genius, the tremendous, unforgetable climaxes. Not to have heard Caruso sing is to have missed something out of life; not to have seen him act in some of his best parts is to have missed the inspiration of great acting. As Mr. Huneker once wrote: "The artistic career of Caruso is as well known as that of any great general or statesman; he is a national figure. He is a great artist, and, what is rarer, a genuine man."

And how we have seen his art grow and

ripen, since he first began to sing for us. The date of his first appearance at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, was November 23rd, 1903. Then the voice was marvelous in its freshness and beauty, but histrionic development lagged far behind. The singer seemed unable to make us visualize the characters he endeavored to portray. It was always Caruso who sang a certain part; we could never forget that. But constant study and experience have eliminated even this defect, so that to-day the singer and actor are justly balanced; both are superlatively great. Can any one who hears and sees Caruso in the rôle of Samson, listen unmoved to the throbbing wail of that glorious voice and the unutterable woe of the blind man's poignant impersonation?

IN EARLY DAYS

Enrico Caruso was born in Naples, the youngest of nineteen children. His father was an engineer and the boy was taught the trade in his father's shop, and was expected to follow in his father's footsteps. But destiny decreed otherwise. As he himself said, to one listener:

"I had always sung as far back as I can remember, for the pure love of it. My voice

was contralto, and I sang in a church in Naples from fourteen till I was eighteen. Then I had to go into the army for awhile. I had never learned how to sing, for I had never been taught. One day a young officer of my company said to me: 'You will spoil your voice if you keep on singing like that'—for I suppose I was fond of shouting in those days. 'You should learn *how* to sing,' he said to me; 'you must study.' He introduced me to a young man who at once took an interest in me and brought me to a singing master named Vergine. I sang for him, but he was very discouraging. His verdict was it would be hopeless to try to make a singer out of me. As it was, I might possibly earn a few lire a night with my voice, but according to his idea I had far better stick to my father's trade, in which I could at least earn forty cents a day.

"But my young friend would not give up so easily. He begged Vergine to hear me again. Things went a little better with me the second time and Vergine consented to teach me.

RIGID DISCIPLINE

"And now began a period of rigid discipline. In Vergine's idea I had been singing too loud; I must reverse this and sing everything softly.

I felt as though in a strait-jacket; all my efforts at expression were most carefully repressed; I was never allowed to let out my voice. At last came a chance to try my wings in opera, at ten lire a night ($2.00). In spite of the régime of repression to which I had been subjected for the past three years, there were still a few traces of my natural feeling left. The people were kind to me and I got a few engagements. Vergine had so long trained me to sing softly, never permitting me to sing out, that people began to call me the Broken Tenor.

THE FIRST REAL CHANCE

"A better chance came before long. In 1896 the Opera House in Salerno decided to produce *I Puritani.* At the last moment the tenor they had engaged to sing the leading rôle became ill, and there was no one to sing the part. Lombardi, conductor of the orchestra, told the directors there was a young singer in Naples, about eighteen miles away, who he knew could help them out and sing the part. When they heard the name Caruso, they laughed scornfully. 'What, the Broken Tenor?' they asked. But Lombardi pressed my claim, assured them I could be engaged,

and no doubt would be glad to sing for nothing.

"So I was sent for. Lombardi talked with me awhile first. He explained by means of several illustrations, that I must not stand cold and stiff in the middle of the stage, while I sang nice, sweet tones. No, I must let out my voice, I must throw myself into the part, I must be alive to it—must live it and in it. In short, I must act as well as sing.

A REVELATION

"It was all like a revelation to me. I had never realized before how absolutely necessary it was to act out the character I attempted. So I sang *I Puritani,* with as much success as could have been expected of a young singer with so little experience. Something awoke in me at that moment. From that night I was never called a 'Broken Tenor' again. I made a regular engagement at two thousand lire a month. Out of this I paid regularly to Vergine the twenty-five per cent which he always demanded. He was somewhat reconciled to me when he saw that I had a real engagement and was making a substantial sum, though he still insisted that I would lose my voice in a few years. But time passes and I am still singing.

RESULTS OF THE REVELATION

"The fact that I could secure an opera engagement made me realize I had within me the making of an artist, if I would really labor for such an end. When I became thoroughly convinced of this, I was transformed from an amateur into a professional in a single day. I now began to take care of myself, learn good habits, and endeavored to cultivate my mind as well as my voice. The conviction gradually grew upon me that if I studied and worked, I would be able one day to sing in such a way as to satisfy myself."

THE VALUE OF WORK TO THE SINGER

Caruso believes in the necessity for work, and sends this message to all ambitious students: "To become a singer requires work, work, and again work! It need not be in any special corner of the earth; there is no one spot that will do more for you than other places. It doesn't matter so much where you are, if you have intelligence and a good ear. Listen to yourself; your ear will tell you what kind of tones you are making. If you will only use your own intelligence you can correct your own faults."

CEASELESS STUDY

This is no idle speech, voiced to impress the reader. Caruso practices what he preaches, for he is an incessant worker. Two or three hours in the forenoon, and several more later in the day, whenever possible. He does not neglect daily vocal technic, scales and exercises. There are always many rôles to keep in rehearsal with the accompanist. He has a repertoire of seventy rôles, some of them learned in two languages. Among the parts he has prepared but has never sung are: *Othello, Fra Diavolo, Eugen Onegin, Pique Dame, Falstaff* and *Jewels of the Madonna.*

Besides the daily review of opera rôles, Caruso examines many new songs; every day brings a generous supply. Naturally some of these find their way into the waste basket; some are preserved for reference, while the favored ones which are accepted must be studied for use in recital.

I had the privilege, recently, of spending a good part of one forenoon in Mr. Caruso's private quarters at his New York Hotel, examining a whole book full of mementos of the Jubilee celebration of March, 1919, on the occasion when the great tenor completed

twenty-five years of activity on the operatic stage. Here were gathered telegrams and cablegrams from all over the world. Many letters and cards of greeting and congratulation are preserved in this portly volume. Among them one noticed messages from Mme. Schumann-Heink, the Flonzaley Quartet, Cleofonte Campanini and hosts of others. Here, too, is preserved the Jubilee Programme booklet, also the libretto used on that gala occasion. Music lovers all over the world will echo the hope that this wonderful voice may be preserved for many years to come!

A LAST WORD

The above article was shown to Mr. Caruso, at his request, and I was asked a few days later to come to him. There had been the usual rehearsal at the Opera House that day. "Ah, those rehearsals," exclaimed the secretary, stopping his typewriter for an instant; "no one who has never been through it has any idea of what a rehearsal means." And he lifted hands and eyes expressively. "Mr. Caruso rose at eight, went to rehearsal at ten and did not finish till after three. He is now resting, but will see you in a moment."

Presently the great tenor opened the door

and entered. He wore a lounging coat of oriental silk, red bordered, and on the left hand gleamed a wonderful ring, a broad band of dull gold, set with diamonds, rubies and sapphires. He shook hands, said he had read my story, that it was quite correct and had his entire approval.

"And have you a final message to the young singers who are struggling and longing to sing some day as wonderfully as you do?"

"Tell them to study, to work always,—and —to sacrifice!"

His eyes had a strange, inscrutable light in them, as he doubtless recalled his own early struggles, and life of constant effort.

And so take his message to heart:

"Work, work—and—sacrifice!"

II

GERALDINE FARRAR

THE WILL TO SUCCEED A COMPELLING FORCE

"To measure the importance of Geraldine Farrar (at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York) one has only to think of the void there would have been during the last decade, and more, if she had not been there. Try to picture the period between 1906 and 1920 without Farrar—it is inconceivable! Farrar, more than any other singer, has been the triumphant living symbol of the new day for the American artist at the Metropolitan. She paved the way. Since that night, in 1906, when her Juliette stirred the staid old house, American singers have been added year by year to the personnel. Among these younger singers there are those who will admit at once that it was the success of Geraldine Farrar which gave them the impetus to work hard for a like success."

These thoughts have been voiced by a recent

Geraldine Farrar

reviewer, and will find a quick response from young singers all over the country, who have been inspired by the career of this representative artist, and by the thousands who have enjoyed her singing and her many characterizations.

I was present on the occasion of Miss Farrar's début at the greatest opera house of her home land. I, too, was thrilled by the fresh young voice in the girlish and charming impersonation of Juliette. It is a matter of history that from the moment of her auspicious return to America she has been constantly before the public, from the beginning to end of each operatic season. Other singers often come for part of the season, step out and make room for others. But Miss Farrar, as well as Mr. Caruso, can be depended on to remain.

Any one who gives the question a moment's thought, knows that such a career, carried through a score of years, means constant, unremitting labor. There must be daily work on vocal technic; repertoire must be kept up to opera pitch, and last and perhaps most important of all, new works must be sought, studied and assimilated.

The singer who can accomplish these tasks

will have little or no time for society and the gay world, inasmuch as her strength must be devoted to the service of her art. She must keep healthy hours, be always ready to appear, and never disappoint her audiences. And such, according to Miss Farrar's own words is her record in the service of art.

While zealously guarding her time from interruption from the merely curious, Miss Farrar does not entrench herself behind insurmountable barriers, as many singers seem to do, so that no honest seeker for her views of study and achievement can find her. While making a rule not to try voices of the throng of young singers who would like to have her verdict on their ability and prospects, Miss Farrar is very gracious to those who really need to see her. Again—unlike others—she will make an appointment a couple of weeks in advance, and one can rest assured she will keep that appointment to the day and hour, in spite of many pressing calls on her attention.

To meet and talk for an hour with an artist who has so often charmed you from the other side of the footlights, is a most interesting experience. In the present instance it began with my being taken up to Miss Farrar's priv-

ate sanctum, at the top of her New York residence. Though this is her den, where she studies and works, it is a spacious parlor, where all is light, color, warmth and above all, *quiet*. A thick crimson carpet hushes the footfall. A luxurious couch piled with silken cushions, and comfortable arm chairs are all in the same warm tint; over the grand piano is thrown a cover of red velvet, gold embroidered. Portraits of artists and many costly trifles are scattered here and there. The young lady who acts as secretary happened to be in the room and spoke with enthusiasm of the singer's absorption in her work, her delight in it, her never failing energy and good spirits. "From the day I heard Miss Farrar sing I felt drawn to her and hoped the time would come when I could serve her in some way. I did not know then that it would be in this way. Her example is an inspiration to all who come in touch with her."

In a few moments Miss Farrar herself appeared, and the young girl withdrew.

And was this Farrar who stood before me, in the flush of vigorous womanhood, and who welcomed me so graciously? The first impression was one of friendliness and sincerity, which caused the artist for the moment to be for-

gotten in the unaffected simplicity of the woman.

Miss Farrar settled herself comfortably among the red silk cushions and was ready for our talk. The simplicity of manner was reflected in her words. She did not imply—there is only one right way, and I have found it. "These things seem best for my voice, and this is the way I work. But, since each voice is different, they might not fit any one else. I have no desire to lay down rules for others; I can only speak of my own experience."

THE QUESTION OF HEALTH

"And you would first know how I keep strong and well and always ready? Perhaps the answer is, I keep regular hours and habits, and love my work. I have always loved to sing, as far back as I can remember. Music means everything to me—it is my life. As a child and young girl, I was the despair of my playmates because I would not join their games; I did not care to skate, play croquet or tennis, or such things. I never wanted to exercise violently, and, to me, unnecessarily, because it interfered with my singing; took energy which I thought might be better applied. As I grew older I did not care to

keep late hours and be in an atmosphere where people smoked and perhaps drank, for these things were bad for my voice and I could not do my work next day. My time is always regularly laid out. I rise at half past seven, and am ready to work at nine. I do not care to sit up late at night, either, for I think late hours react on the voice. Occasionally, if we have a few guests for dinner, I ask them, when ten thirty arrives, to stay as long as they wish and enjoy themselves, but I retire.

TECHNICAL STUDY

"There are gifted people who may be called natural born singers. Melba is one of these. Such singers do not require much technical practice, or if they need a little of it, half an hour a day is sufficient. I am not one of those who do not need to practice. I give between one and two hours daily to vocalizes, scales and tone study. But I love it! A scale is beautiful to me, if it is rightly sung. In fact it is not merely a succession of notes; it represents color. I always translate sound into color. It is a fascinating study to make different qualities of tonal color in the voice. Certain rôles require an entirely different range of colors from others. One night I must

sing a part with thick, heavy, rich tones; the next night my tones must be thinned out in quite another timbre of the voice, to fit an opposite character."

Asked if she can hear herself, Miss Farrar answered:

"No, I do not actually hear my voice, except in a general way; but we learn to know the sensations produced in muscles of throat, head, face, lips and other parts of the anatomy, which vibrate in a certain manner to correct tone production. We learn the *feeling* of the tone. Therefore every one, no matter how advanced, requires expert advice as to the results.

WITH LEHMANN

"I have studied for a long time with Lilli Lehmann in Berlin; in fact I might say she is almost my only teacher, though I did have some instruction before going to her, both in America and Paris. You see, I always sang, even as a very little girl. My mother has excellent taste and knowledge in music, and finding I was in danger of straining my voice through singing with those older than myself, she placed me with a vocal teacher when I was twelve, as a means of preservation.

"Lehmann is a wonderful teacher and an

extraordinary woman as well. What art is there—what knowledge and understanding! What intensity there is in everything she does. She used to say: 'Remember, these four walls which inclose you, make a very different space to fill compared to an opera house; you must take this fact into consideration and study accordingly.' No one ever said a truer word. If one only studies or sings in a room or studio, one has no idea of what it means to fill a theater. It is a distinct branch of one's work to gain power and control and to adapt one's self to large spaces. One can only learn this by doing it.

"It is sometimes remarked by listeners at the opera, that we sing too loud, or that we scream. They surely never think of the great size of the stage, of the distance from the proscenium arch to the footlights, or from the arch to the first set of wings. They do not consider that within recent years the size of the orchestra has been largely increased, so that we are obliged to sing against this great number of instruments, which are making every possible kind of a noise except that of a siren. It is no wonder that we must make much effort to be heard: sometimes the effort may seem injudicious. The point we

must consider is to make the greatest possible effect with the least possible exertion.

"Lehmann is the most painstaking, devoted teacher a young singer can have. It is proof of her excellent method and her perfect understanding of vocal mastery, that she is still able to sing in public, if not with her old-time power, yet with good tone quality. It shows what an artist she really is. I always went over to her every summer, until the war came. We would work together at her villa in Gruenewald, which you yourself know. Or we would go for a holiday down nearer Salzburg, and would work there. We always worked wherever we were.

MEMORIZING

"How do I memorize? I play the song or rôle through a number of times, concentrating on both words and music at once. I am a pianist anyway; and committing to memory is very easy for me. I was trained to learn by heart from the very start. When I sang my little songs at six years old, mother would never let me have any music before me: I must know my songs by heart. And so I learned them quite naturally. To me singing was like talking to people.

CONTRASTING COLORATURA AND DRAMATIC SINGING

"You ask me to explain the difference between the coloratura and the dramatic organ. I should say it is a difference of timbre. The coloratura voice is bright and brilliant in its higher portion, but becomes weaker and thinner as it descends; whereas the dramatic voice has a thicker, richer quality all through, especially in its lower register. The coloratura voice will sing upper C, and it will sound very high indeed. I might sing the same tone, but it would sound like A flat, because the tone would be of such totally different timbre.

TO THE YOUNG SINGER

"If I have any message to the young singer, it would be: Stick to your work and study systematically, whole-heartedly. If you do not love your work enough to give it your best thought, to make sacrifices for it, there is something wrong with you. Then choose some other line of work, to which you can give undivided attention and devotion. For music requires this. As for sacrifices, they really do not exist, if they promote the thing you honestly love most.

"Do not fancy you can properly prepare

yourself in a short time to undertake a musical career, for the path is a long and arduous one. You must never stop studying, for there is always so much to learn. If I have sung a rôle a hundred times, I always find places that can be improved; indeed I never sing a rôle twice exactly in the same way. So, from whatever side you consider the singer's work and career, both are of absorbing interest.

"Another thing; do not worry, for that is bad for your voice. If you have not made this tone correctly, or sung that phrase to suit yourself, pass it over for the moment with a wave of the hand or a smile; but don't become discouraged. Go right on! I knew a beautiful American in Paris who possessed a lovely voice. But she had a very sensitive nature, which could not endure hard knocks. She began to worry over little failures and disappointments, with the result that in three years her voice was quite gone. We must not give way to disappointments, but conquer them, and keep right along the path we have started on.

MODERN MUSIC

"Modern music requires quite a different handling of the voice and makes entirely dif-

ferent demands upon it than does the older music. The old Italian operas required little or no action, only beautiful singing. The opera houses were smaller and so were the orchestras. The singer could stand still in the middle of the stage and pour out beautiful tones, with few movements of body to mar his serenity. But we, in these days, demand action as well as song. We need singing actors and actresses. The music is declamatory; the singer must throw his whole soul into his part, must act as well as sing. Things are all on a larger scale. It is a far greater strain on the voice to interpret one of the modern Italian operas than to sing one of those quietly beautiful works of the old school.

"America's growth in music has been marvelous on the appreciative and interpretive side. With such a musical awakening, we can look forward to the appearance of great creative genius right here in this country, perhaps in the near future. Why should we not expect it? We have not yet produced a composer who can write enduring operas or symphonies. MacDowell is our highest type as yet; but others will come who will carry the standard higher.

VOICE LIMITATIONS

"The singer must be willing to admit limitations of voice and style and not attempt parts which do not come within the compass of her attainments. Neither is it wise to force the voice up or down when it seems a great effort to do so. We can all think of singers whose natural quality is mezzo—let us say—who try to force the voice up into a higher register. There is one artist of great dramatic gifts, who not content with the rich quality of her natural organ, tried to add several high notes to the upper portion. The result was disastrous. Again, some of our young singers who possess beautiful, sweet voices, should not force them to the utmost limit of power, simply to fill, or try to fill a great space. The life of the voice will be impaired by such injurious practice.

VOCAL MASTERY

"What do I understand by vocal mastery? It is something very difficult to define. For a thing that is mastered must be really perfect. To master vocal art, the singer must have so developed his voice that it is under complete control; then he can do with it whatsoever he wishes. He must be able to produce all he desires of power, pianissimo, accent, shading,

delicacy and variety of color. Who is equal to the task?"

Miss Farrar was silent a moment; then she said, answering her own question:

"I can think of but two people who honestly can be said to possess vocal mastery: they are Caruso and McCormack. Those who have only heard the latter do little Irish tunes, have no idea of what he is capable. I have heard him sing Mozart as no one else I know of can. These two artists have, through ceaseless application, won vocal mastery. It is something we are all striving for!"

III

VICTOR MAUREL

MIND IS EVERYTHING

Mr. James Huneker, in one of his series of articles entitled "With the Immortals," in the New York *World*, thus, in his inimitable way characterizes Victor Maurel:

"I don't suppose there is to be found in musical annals such diversity of aptitudes as that displayed by this French baritone. Is there an actor on any stage to-day who can portray both the grossness of Falstaff and the subtlety of Iago? Making allowance for the different art medium that the singing actor must work in, and despite the larger curves of operatic pose and gesture, Maurel kept astonishingly near to the characters he assumed. He was Shakespearian; his Falstaff was the most wonderful I ever saw."

And then Iago: "In the Maurel conception, Othello's Ancient was not painted black in black—the heart of darkness, but with many nuances, many gradations. He was economi-

Victor Maurel

cal of gesture, playing on the jealous Moor as plays a skillfully handled bow upon a finely attuned violin. His was truly an objective characterization. His Don Giovanni was broadly designed. He was the aristocrat to the life, courtly, brave, amorous, intriguing, cruel, superstitious and quick to take offense. In his best estate, the drinking song was sheer virtuosity. Suffice to add that Verdi intrusted to him the task of "originating" two such widely sundered rôles as Iago and Falstaffo. An extraordinary artist!"

One evening we were discussing the merits of various famous singers of the past and present. My friend is an authority whose opinion I greatly respect. He is not only a singer himself but is rapidly becoming a singing master of renown.

After we had conferred for a long time, my friend summed it all up with the remark:

"You know who, in my opinion, is the greatest, the dean of them all, a past master of the art of song—Victor Maurel."

Did I not know! In times gone by had we not discussed by the hour every phase of Maurel's mastery of voice and action? Did we not together listen to that voice and watch with breathless interest his investiture of Don

Giovanni, in the golden days when Lilli Lehmann and the De Reszkes took the other parts. Was there ever a more elegant courtly Don, a greater Falstaff, a more intriguing Iago?

In those youthful days, my friend's greatest ambition was to be able to sing and act like Maurel. To this end he labored unceasingly. Second only to this aim was another—to know the great baritone personally, to become his friend, to discuss the finest issues of art with him, to consult him and have the benefit of his experience. The consummation of this desire has been delayed for years, but it is one of the "all things" which will surely come to him who waits. Maurel is now once more on American soil, and doubtless intends remaining for a considerable period. My friend is also established in the metropolis. The two have met, not only once but many times—indeed they have become fast friends.

"I will take you to him," promised friend Jacque,—knowing my desire to meet the "grand old man"; "but don't ask for too many of his opinions about singers, as he does not care to be quoted."

Late one afternoon we arrived at his residence. At the moment he was in his music room, where, for the last hour he had been sing-

ing *Falstaff!* If we could only have been hidden away in some quiet corner to listen! He came running down the stairway with almost the agility of a boy, coming to meet us with simple dignity and courtesy. After the first greetings were over we begged permission to examine the many paintings which met the eye everywhere. There was a large panel facing us, representing a tall transparent vase, holding a careless bunch of summer flowers, very artistically handled. Near it hung an out-of-door sketch, a garden path leading into the green. Other bits of landscape still-life and portraits made up the collection. They had all been painted by the same artist—none other than Maurel himself. As we examined the flower panel, he came and stood by us.

"Painting is a great art," he said; "an art which requires profound study. I have been a close student of this art for many years and love it more and more."

"M. Maurel aims now to express himself through the art of color and form, as he has always done through voice and gesture," remarked my friend.

"Art is the highest means of expression," went on the master, "whether through music, painting, sculpture, architecture or the theater.

The effort to express myself through another art-medium, painting, has long been a joy to me. I have studied with no teacher but myself, but I have learned from all the great masters; they have taught me everything."

He then led the way to his music room on the floor above. Here were more paintings, many rare pieces of furniture and his piano. A fine portrait of Verdi, with an affectionate autograph, stood on a table; one of Ambroise Thomas, likewise inscribed, hung near. "A serious man, almost austere," said Maurel, regarding the portrait of Verdi thoughtfully, "but one of the greatest masters of all time."

Praying us to be seated, he placed himself on an ottoman before us. The talk easily drifted into the subject of the modern operatic stage, and modern operas of the Italian school, in which one is so often tempted to shout rather than sing. The hero of Mozart's Don Giovanni, who could sing his music as perhaps no one else has ever done, would not be likely to have much patience with the modern style of explosive vocal utterance.

"How do you preserve your voice and your repertoire?" I questioned.

M. Maurel gazed before him thoughtfully.

"It is entirely through the mind that I keep

both. I know so exactly how to produce tone qualities, that if I recall those sensations which accompany tone production, I can induce them at will. How do we make tones, sing an aria, impersonate a rôle? Is not all done with the mind, with thought? I must think the tone before I produce it—before I sing it; I must mentally visualize the character and determine how I will represent it, before I attempt it. I must identify myself with the character I am to portray before I can make it *live.* Does not then all come from thinking—from thought?

"Again: I can think out the character and make a mental picture of it for myself, but how shall I project it for others to see? I have to convince myself first that I am that character—I must identify myself with it; then I must convince those who hear me that I am really that character." Maurel rose and moved to the center of the room.

"I am to represent some character—Amonasro, let us say. I must present the captive King, bound with chains and brought before his captors. I must feel with him, if I am really going to represent him. I must believe myself bound and a prisoner; then I must, through pose and action, through expression of

face, gesture, voice, everything—I must make this character real to the audience."

And as we looked, he assumed the pose of the man in chains, his hands seemed tied, his body bent, his expression one in which anger and revenge mingled; in effect, he was for the moment Amonasro.

"I have only made you see my mental concept of Amonasro. If I have once thoroughly worked out a conception, made it my own, then it is mine. I can create it at any moment. If I feel well and strong I can sing the part now in the same way as I have always sung it, because my thought is the same and thought produces. Whether I have a little more voice, or less voice, what does it matter? I can never lose my conception of a character, for it is in my mind, and mind projects it. So there is no reason to lose the voice, for that also is in mind and can be thought out at will.

"Suppose I have an opposite character to portray,—the elegant Don Giovanni, for example"; and drawing himself up and wrapping an imaginary cloak about him, with the old well-remembered courtly gesture, his face and manner were instantly transformed at the thought of his favorite character. He turned and smiled on us, his strong features lighted,

and his whole appearance expressed the embodiment of Mozart's hero.

"You see I must have lived, so to say, in these characters and made them my own, or I could not recall them at a moment's notice. All impersonation, to be artistic, to be vital, must be a part of one's self; one must get into the character. When I sing Iago I am no longer myself—I am another person altogether; self is quite forgotten; I am Iago, for the time being.

"In Paris, at the Sorbonne, I gave a series of lectures; the first was on this very subject, the identification of one's self with the character to be portrayed. The large audience of about fifteen hundred, contained some of the most famous among artists and men of letters"; and Maurel, with hands clasped about his knee, gazed before him into space, and we knew he was picturing in mental vision, the scene at the Sorbonne, which he had just recalled.

After a moment, he resumed. "The singer, though trying to act out the character he assumes, must not forget to *sing*. The combination of fine singing and fine acting is rare. Nowadays people think if they can act, that atones for inartistic singing; then they yield to

the temptation to shout, to make harsh tones, simply for effect." And the famous baritone caricatured some of the sounds he had recently heard at an operatic performance with such gusto, that a member of the household came running in from an adjoining room, thinking there must have been an accident and the master of the house was calling for help. He hastily assured her all was well—no one was hurt; then we all had a hearty laugh over the little incident.

And now we begged to be allowed to visit the atelier, where the versatile artist worked out his pictures. He protested that it was in disorder, that he would not dare to take us up, and so on. After a little he yielded to persuasion, saying, however, he would go up first and arrange the room a little. As soon as he had left us my friend turned to me:

"What a remarkable man! So strong and vigorous, in spite of his advanced age. No doubt he travels those stairs twenty times a day. He is as alert as a young man; doubtless he still has his voice, as he says. And what a career he has had. You know he was a friend of Edward the Seventh; they once lived together. Then he and Verdi were close friends; he helped coach singers for Verdi's operas.

He says it was a wonderful experience, when the composer sat down at the piano, put his hands on the keys and showed the singers how he wanted his music sung!

"Early in his career Maurel sang in Verdi's opera, *Simone Boccanegra*, which one never hears now, but it has a fine baritone part, and a couple of very dramatic scenes, especially the final scene at the close. This is the death scene. Maurel had sung and acted so wonderfully on a certain occasion that all the singers about him were in tears. Verdi was present at this performance and was deeply moved by Maurel's singing and acting. He came upon the stage when all was over, and exclaimed, in a voice trembling with emotion: 'You have created the rôle just as I would have it; I shall write an opera especially *for you!*' This he did; it was *Othello,* and the Iago was composed for Maurel. In his later years, when he seldom left his home, the aged composer several times expressed the wish that he might go to Paris, just to hear Maurel sing once more.

"It is very interesting that he was led to speak to us as he did just now, about mental control, and the part played by mind in the singer's study, equipment and career. It is

a side of the question which every young singer must seriously consider, first, last and always. But here he comes."

Again protesting about the appearance of his simple studio, the master led the way up the stairways till we reached the top of the house, where a north-lighted room had been turned into a painter's atelier. With mingled feelings we stepped within this modest den of a great artist, which held his treasures. These were never shown to the casual observer, nor to the merely curious; they were reserved for the trusted few.

The walls were lined with sketches; heads, still life, landscapes, all subjects alike interested the painter. A rugged bust of Verdi, over life size, modeled in plaster, stood in one corner. On an easel rested a spirited portrait of Maurel, done by himself.

"My friends tell me I should have a larger studio, with better light; but I am content with this, for here is quiet and here I can be alone, free to commune with myself. Here I can study my art undisturbed,—for Art is my religion. If people ask if I go to church, I say No, but I worship the immortality which is within, which I feel in my soul, the reflection of the Almighty!"

In quiet mood a little later we descended the white stairway and passed along the corridors of this house, which looks so foreign to American eyes, and has the atmosphere of a Paris home.

The artist accompanied us to the street door and bade us farewell, in his kindly dignified manner.

As the door closed and we were in the street, my friend said:

"A wonderful man and a rare artist. Where shall we find his like to-day?"

IV

A VISIT TO MME. LILLI LEHMANN

A NUMBER of years before the great war, a party of us were spending a few weeks in Berlin. It was midsummer; the city, filled as it was for one of us at least, with dear memories of student days, was in most alluring mood. Flowers bloomed along every balcony, vines festooned themselves from windows and doorways, as well as from many unexpected corners. The parks, large and small, which are the delight of a great city, were at their best and greenest—gay with color. Many profitable hours were spent wandering through the galleries and museums, hearing concerts and opera, and visiting the old quarters of the city, so picturesque and full of memories.

Two of us, who were musicians, were anxious to meet the famous dramatic soprano, Lilli Lehmann, who was living quietly in one of the suburbs of the city. Notes were exchanged, and on a certain day we were bidden to come, out of the regular hours for visitors, by "special exception."

How well I remember the drive through the newer residential section of Berlin. The path before long led us through country estates, past beautifully kept gardens and orchards. Our destination was the little suburb of Gruenewald, itself like a big garden, with villas nestling close to each other, usually set back from the quiet, shaded streets. Some of the villas had iron gratings along the pathway, through which one saw gay flowers and garden walks, often statuary and fountains. Other homes were secluded from the street by high brick walls, frequently decorated on top by urns holding flowers and drooping vines.

Behind such a picturesque barrier, we found the gateway which led to Mme. Lehmann's cottage. We rang and soon a trim maid came to undo the iron gate. The few steps leading to the house door did not face us as we entered the inclosure, but led up from the side. We wanted to linger and admire the shrubs and flowering plants, but the maid hastened before us so we had to follow.

From the wide entrance hall doors led into rooms on either hand. We were shown into a salon on the left, and bidden to await Madame's coming.

In the few moments of restful quiet before

she entered, we had time to glance over this sanctum of a great artist. To say it was filled with mementos and *objets d'art* hardly expresses the sense of repleteness. Every square foot was occupied by some treasure. Let the eye travel around the room. At the left, as one entered the doorway, stood a fine bust of the artist, chiseled in pure white marble, supported on a pedestal of black marble. Then came three long, French windows, opening into a green garden. Across the farther window stood a grand piano, loaded with music. At the further end of the room, if memory serves, hung a large, full length portrait of the artist herself. A writing desk, laden with souvenirs, stood near. On the opposite side a divan covered with rich brocade; more paintings on the walls, one very large landscape by a celebrated German painter.

Before we could note further details, Mme. Lehmann stood in the doorway, then came forward and greeted us cordially.

How often I had seen her impersonate her great rôles, both in Germany and America. They were always of some queenly character. Could it be possible this was the famous Lehmann, this simple housewife, in black skirt and white blouse, with a little apron as badge of

home keeping. But there was the stately tread, the grand manner, the graceful movement. What mattered if the silver hair were drawn back severely from the face; there was the dignity of expression, classic features, penetrating glance and mobile mouth I remembered.

After chatting a short time and asking many questions about America, where her experiences had been so pleasant, our talk was interrupted, for a little, by a voice trial, which Madame had agreed to give. Many young singers, from everywhere, were anxious to have expert judgment on their progress or attainments, so Lehmann was often appealed to and gave frequent auditions of this kind. The fee was considerable, but she never kept a penny of it for herself; it all went to one of her favorite charities. The young girl who on this day presented herself for the ordeal was an American, who, it seemed, had not carried her studies very far.

EXAMINING A PUPIL

Mme. Lehmann seated herself at the piano and asked for scales and vocalizes. The young girl, either from fright or poor training, did not make a very fortunate impression. She could not seem to bring out a single pure

steady tone, much less sing scales acceptably.

Madame with a resigned look finally asked for a song, which was given. It was a little song of Franz, I remember. Then Lehmann wheeled around on the stool and said to us, in German:

"The girl cannot sing—she has little or no voice to begin with, and has not been rightly trained." Then to the young girl she said, kindly, in English:

"My dear young lady, you have almost everything to learn about singing, for as yet you cannot even sing one tone correctly; you cannot even speak correctly. First of all you need physical development; you must broaden your chest through breathing exercises; you are too thin chested. You must become physically stronger if you ever hope to sing acceptably. Then you must study diction and languages. This is absolutely necessary for the singer. Above all you must know how to pronounce and sing in your own language. So many do not think it necessary to study their own language; they think they know that already; but one's mother tongue requires study as well as any other language.

"The trouble with American girls is they are always in a hurry. They are not content to sit

down quietly and study till they have developed themselves into something before they ever think of coming to Europe. They think if they can just come over here and sing for an artist, that fact alone will give them prestige in America. But that gives them quite the opposite reputation over here. American girls are too often looked upon as superficial, because they come over here quite unprepared. I say to all of them, as I say to you: Go home and study; there are plenty of good teachers of voice and piano in your own land. Then, when you can *sing*, come over here, if you wish; but do not come until you are prepared."

After this little episode, we continued our talk for a while longer. Then, fearing to trespass on her time, we rose to leave. She came to the door with us, followed us down the steps into the front garden, and held the gate open for us, when we finally left. We had already expressed the hope that she might be able to return to America, at no very distant day, and repeat her former triumphs there. Her fine face lighted at the thought, and her last words to us were, as she held open the little iron wicket. "I have a great desire to go to your country again; perhaps, in a year or two—who knows—I may be able to do it."

She stood there, a noble, commanding figure, framed in the green of her garden, and waved her handkerchief, till our cab turned a corner, and she was lost to our view.

THE MOZART FESTIVAL

Several years later, a year before the world war started, to be exact, we had the pleasure of meeting the artist again, and this time, of hearing her sing.

It was the occasion of the Mozart Festival in Salzburg. It is well known that Lehmann, devoted as she has always been to the genius of Mozart, and one of the greatest interpreters of his music, had thrown her whole energy into the founding of a suitable memorial to the master in his native city. This memorial was to consist of a large music school, a concert hall and home for opera. The Mozarteum was not yet completed, but a Festival was held each year in Salzburg, to aid the project. Madame Lehmann was always present and sang on these occasions.

We timed our visit to Mozart's birthplace, so that we should be able to attend the Festival, which lasted as usual five days. The concerts were held in the Aula Academica, a fine Saal in the old picturesque quarter of the city.

At the opening concert, Lehmann sang a long, difficult Concert Aria of Mozart. We could not help wondering, before she began, how time had treated this great organ; whether we should be able to recognize the famous Lehmann who had formerly taken such high rank as singer and interpreter in America. We need not have feared that the voice had become impaired. Or, if it had been, it had become rejuvenated on this occasion. Mme. Lehmann sang with all her well-remembered power and fervor, all her exaltation of spirit, and of course she had a great ovation at the close. She looked like a queen in ivory satin and rare old lace, with jewels on neck, arms and in her silver hair. In the auditorium, three arm chairs had been placed in front of the platform. The Arch-duke, Prince Eugen, the royal patron of the Festival, occupied one. When Madame Lehmann had finished her Aria, she stepped down from the platform. The Prince rose at once and went to meet her. She gave him her hand with a graceful curtesy and he led her to the armchair next his own, which had evidently been placed in position for her special use.

At the close of the concert we had a brief chat with her. The next day she was present

at the morning concert. This time she was gowned in black, with an ermine cape thrown over her shoulders. The Archduke sat beside her in the arm chair, as he had done the evening before. We had a bow and smile as she passed down the aisle.

We trust the Mozarteum in Salzburg, for which Mme. Lehmann has labored with such devotion, will one day fulfill its noble mission.

LEHMANN THE TEACHER

As a teacher of the art of singing Madame Lehmann has long been a recognized authority, and many artists now actively before the public, have come from under her capable hands. Her book, "How to Sing,"—rendered in English by Richard Aldrich—(Macmillan) has illumined the path for many a serious student who seeks light on that strange, wonderful, hidden instrument—the voice. Madame Lehmann, by means of many explanations and numerous plates, endeavors to make clear to the young student how to begin and how to proceed in her vocal studies.

BREATHING

On the important subject of breathing she says:

"No one can sing without preparing for it mentally and physically. It is not enough to sing well, one must know how one does it. I practice many breathing exercises without using tone. Breath becomes voice through effort of will and by use of vocal organs. When singing emit the smallest quantity of breath. Vocal chords are breath regulators; relieve them of all overwork.

"At the start a young voice should be taught to begin in the middle and work both ways—that is, up and down. A tone should never be forced. Begin piano, make a long crescendo and return to piano. Another exercise employs two connecting half tones, using one or two vowels. During practice stand before a mirror, that one may see what one is doing. Practice about one hour daily. Better that amount each day than ten hours one day and none the next. The test will be; do you feel rested and ready for work each morning? If not you have done too much the day before."

REGISTERS

In regard to registers Madame Lehmann has this to say: "In the formation of the voice no registers should exist or be created.

As long as the word is kept in use, registers will not disappear."

PHYSIOLOGY

In spite of the fact there are many drawings and plates illustrating the various organs of head and throat which are used in singing, Madame Lehmann says:

"The singer is often worried about questions of physiology, whereas she need—must—know little about it.

THE NASAL QUALITY

"The singer must have some nasal quality, otherwise the voice sounds colorless and expressionless. We must sing toward the nose: (not necessarily through the nose).

"For many ills of the voice and tone production, I use long, slow scales. They are an infallible cure.

USE OF THE LIPS

"The lips play a large part in producing variety of tone quality. Each vowel, every word can be colored, as by magic, by well controlled play of the lips. When lips are stiff and unresponsive, the singing is colorless.

Lips are final resonators, through which tones must pass, and lip movements can be varied in every conceivable manner."

POWER AND VELOCITY

She humorously writes: "Singers without power and velocity are like horses without tails. For velocity, practice figures of five, six, seven and eight notes, first slowly, then faster and faster, up and down."

V

AMELITA GALLI-CURCI

SELF-TEACHING THE GREAT ESSENTIAL

No singer can rise to any distinction without the severest kind of self-discipline and hard work. This is the testimony of all the great vocalists of our time—of any time. This is the message they send back from the mountain top of victory to the younger ones who are striving to acquire the mastery they have achieved. Work, work and again—work! And if you have gained even a slight foothold on the hill of fame, then work to keep your place. Above all, be not satisfied with your present progress,—strive for more perfection. There are heights you have not gained—higher up! There are joys for you—higher up, if you will but labor to reach them.

Perhaps there is no singer who more thoroughly believes in the gospel of work, and surely not one who more consistently practices what she preaches, than Amelita Galli-Curci. She knows the value of work, and she loves

Photo by De Strelecki, N. Y.

AMELITA GALLI-CURCI

it for its own sake. There is no long cessation for her, during summer months, "to rest her voice." There is no half-day seclusion after a performance, to recover from the fatigue of singing a rôle the night before. No, for her this event does not spell exhaustion but happiness, exhilaration. It is a pleasure to sing because it is not wearisome—it is a part of herself. And she enjoys the doing! Thus it happens that the morning after a performance, she is up and abroad betimes, ready to attend personally to the many calls upon her time and attention. She can use her speaking voice without fear, because she has never done anything to strain it; she is usually strong and well, buoyant and bright. Those soft, dark eyes are wells of intelligent thinking; the mouth smiles engagingly as she speaks; the slight figure is full of life and energy. Yet there is a deep sense of calm in her presence. A brave, bright spirit; a great, wonderful artist!

These thoughts faintly glimpse my first impression of Mme. Galli-Curci, as she entered her big, sunny parlor, where I was waiting to see her. Her delicate, oval face was aglow with the flush of healthful exercise, for she had just come in from a shopping expedition and

the wintry air was keen. "I love to go shopping," she explained, "so I always do it myself."

She bade me sit beside her on a comfortable divan, and at once began to speak of the things I most wished to hear.

"I am often asked," she began, "to describe how I create this or that effect, how I produce such and such tones, how I make the voice float to the farthest corner, and so on. I answer, that is my secret. In reality it is no secret at all, at least not to any one who has solved the problem. Any one possessing a voice and intelligence, can acquire these things, who knows how to go to work to get them. But if one has no notion of the process, no amount of mere talking will make it plain. Singing an opera rôle seems such an easy thing from the other side of the footlights. People seem to think, if you only know how to sing, it is perfectly natural and easy for you to impersonate a great lyric rôle. And the more mastery you have, the easier they think it is to do it. The real truth of the matter is that it requires years and years of study—constant study, to learn how to sing, before attempting a big part in opera.

"There are so many organs of the body that are concerned in the process of breathing and

tone production; and most of these organs must be, if not always, yet much of the time, relaxed and in an easy pliable condition when you sing. There is the diaphragm—then the throat, larynx, the lungs, nose, lips—all of them help to make the tone. Perhaps I might say the larynx is the most important factor of all. If you can manage that, you have the secret. But no human being can tell you exactly how to do it. Some singers before the public to-day have no notion of how to manage this portion of their anatomy. Others may do so occasionally, but it may only be by accident. They sometimes stumble upon the principle, but not understanding how they did so, they cannot reproduce the desired effects at will. The singer who understands her business must know just how she produces tones and vocal effects. She can then do them at all times, under adverse circumstances, even when nervous, or not in the mood, or indisposed.

SELF-STUDY

"How did I learn to know these things? By constant study, by constant listening—for I have very keen ears—by learning the sensations produced in throat and larynx when I made tones that were correctly placed, were

pleasing and at the same time made the effects I was seeking.

"Milan is my home city—beautiful Milano under the blue Italian skies, the bluest in the world. As a young girl, the daughter of well-to-do parents, I studied piano at the Royal Conservatory there, and also musical theory and counterpoint. I shall ever be grateful I started in this way, with a thorough musical foundation, for it has always been of great advantage to me in further study. When my father met with reverses, I made good use of my pianistic training by giving piano lessons and making a very fair income for a young girl.

"But I longed to sing! Is it not the birthright of every Italian to have a voice? I began to realize I had a voice which might be cultivated. I had always sung a little—every one does; song is the natural, spontaneous expression of our people. But I wished to do more—to express myself in song. So I began to teach myself by singing scales and vocalizes between my piano lessons. Meanwhile I studied all the books on singing I could lay hands on, and then tried to put the principles I learned in this way in practice. In trying to do this I had to find out everything for myself. And that is why I know them! I know exactly what I am

about when I sing. I know what muscles are being used, and in what condition they ought to be; what parts of the anatomy are called into action and why. Nature has given me two great gifts, a voice and good health; for both these gifts I am deeply grateful. The first I have developed through arduous toil; the second I endeavor to preserve through careful living, regular hours and plenty of exercise in the fresh air. I have developed the voice and trained it in the way that seemed to me best for it. There are as many kinds of voices as there are persons; it seems to me each voice should be treated in the way best suited to its possessor. How can any other person tell you how that should be done?" And the singer gave me a bright look, and made a pretty deprecating gesture. "You yourself must have the intelligence to understand your own case and learn how to treat it.

NEVER STRAIN THE VOICE

"A singer who would keep her voice in the best condition, should constantly and reasonably exercise it. I always do a half hour or so of exercises, vocalizes and scales every morning; these are never neglected. But I never do anything to strain the voice in any way.

We are told many fallacies by vocal teachers. One is that the diaphragm must be held firmly in order to give support to the tone. It seems to me this is a serious mistake. I keep the diaphragm relaxed. Thus tone production, in my case, is made at all times with ease; there is never any strain. You ask if it is not very fatiguing to sing against a large orchestra, as we have to, and with a temperamental conductor, like Marinuzzi, for instance. I do not find it so; there is a pure, clear tone, which by its quality, placement and ease of production, will carry farther than mere power ever can. It can be heard above a great orchestra, and it *gets over.*

USE OF THE VOWELS

"Young singers ask me what vowels to use in vocal practice. In my own study I use them all. Of course some are more valuable than others. The O is good, the E needs great care; the Ah is the most difficult of all. I am aware this is contrary to the general idea. But I maintain that the Ah is most difficult; for if you overdo it and the lips are too wide apart, the result is a white tone. And on the other hand, if the lips are nearer—or too near together, or are not managed rightly, stiffness

or a throaty quality is apt to result; then the tone cannot 'float.' I have found the best way is to use the mixed vowels, one melting into the other. The tone can be started with each vowel in turn, and then mingled with the rest of the vowels. Do you know, the feathered songster I love best—the nightingale—uses the mixed vowels too. Ah, how much I have learned from him and from other birds also! Some of them have harsh tones—real quacks—because they open their bills too far, or in a special way. But the nightingale has such a lovely dark tone, a 'covered tone,' which goes to the heart. It has the most exquisite quality in the world. I have learned much from the birds, about what not to do and what to do.

MEMORIZING

"In taking up a new rôle I begin with the story, the libretto, so I may first learn what it is about, its meaning and psychology. I take it to bed with me, or have it by me if lying down, because I understand musical composition and can get a clear idea of the composer's meaning without going to the instrument. After a short time I begin to work it out at the piano, in detail, words and music together. For a great rôle like the *Somnambula* or

Traviata, I must spend three or four years, perhaps more, in preparation, before bringing it to public performance. It takes a long time to master thoroughly an operatic rôle, to work it out from all sides, the singing, the acting, the characterization. To the lay mind, if you can sing, you can easily act a part and also memorize it. They little know the labor which must be bestowed on that same rôle before it can be presented in such a shape as to be adequate, in a way that will get it across. It does not go in a few weeks or even months; it is the work of years. And even then it is never really finished, for it can always be improved with more study, with more care and thought.

THE NECESSITY FOR LANGUAGES

"We hear much about need for study of languages by the singer, and indeed too much stress cannot be placed on this branch of the work. I realize that in America it is perhaps more difficult to impress people with this necessity, as they have not the same need to use other languages in every day life. The singer can always be considered fortunate who has been brought up from earliest years to more than one language. My mother was Spanish,

my father Italian, so this gave me both languages at home. Then in school I learned French, German and English, not only a little smattering of each, but how to write and speak them."

"You certainly have mastered English remarkably well," I could not help remarking, for she was speaking with great fluency, and with hardly any accent. This seemed to please her, for she gave me one of those flashing smiles.

COLORATURA AND DRAMATIC

"Would you be pleased," I asked, "if later on your voice should develop into a dramatic soprano?"

Mme. Galli-Curci thought an instant.

"No," she said, "I think I would rather keep the voice I have. I heartily admire the dramatic voice and the rôles it can sing. Raisa's voice is for me the most beautiful I know. But after all I think, for myself, I prefer the lyric and coloratura parts, they are so beautiful. The old Italian composers knew well how to write for the voice. Their music has beauty, it has melody, and melodic beauty will always make its appeal. And the older Italian music is built up not only of melody and

fioriture, but is also dramatic. For these qualities can combine, and do so in the last act of *Traviata,* which is so full of deep feeling and pathos.

BREATH CONTROL

"Perhaps, in Vocal Mastery, the greatest factor of all is the breathing. To control the breath is what each student is striving to learn, what every singer endeavors to perfect, what every artist should master. It is an almost endless study and an individual one, because each organism and mentality is different. Here, as in everything else, perfect ease and naturalness are to be maintained, if the divine song which is the singer's concept of beauty, is to be 'floated on the breath,' and its merest whisper heard to the farthest corner of the gallery.

THE MATTER IN A NUTSHELL

"To sum up then, the three requirements of vocal mastery are: a, Management of the Larynx; b, Relaxation of the Diaphragm; c, Control of the Breath. To these might be added a fourth; Mixed Vowels.

"But when all these are mastered, what then? Ah, so much more it can never be put into

words. It is self-expression through the medium of tone, for tone must always be a vital part of the singer's individuality, colored by feeling and emotion. Tone is the outlet, the expression of all one has felt, suffered and enjoyed. To perfect one's own instrument, one's medium of expression, must always be the singer's joy and satisfaction."

"And you will surely rest when the arduous season is over?"

"Yes, I will rest when the summer comes, and will return to Italy this year. But even though I seem to rest, I never neglect my vocal practice; that duty and pleasure is always performed."

And with a charming smile and clasp of the hand, she said adieu.

VI

GIUSEPPE DE LUCA

CEASELESS EFFORT NECESSARY FOR ARTISTIC PERFECTION

"A Roman of Rome" is what Mr. Giuseppe De Luca has been named. The very words themselves call up all kinds of enchanting pictures. Sunny Italy is the natural home of beautiful voices: they are her birthright. Her blue sky, flowers and olive trees—her old palaces, hoary with age and romantic story, her fountains and marbles, her wonderful treasures of art, set her in a world apart, in the popular mind. Everything coming from Italy has the right to be romantic and artistic. If it happens to be a voice, it should of necessity be beautiful in quality, rich, smooth, and well trained.

While all singers who come from the sunny land cannot boast all these qualifications, Mr. De Luca, baritone of the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, can do so. Gifted with a naturally fine organ, he has cultivated it arduously and to excellent purpose. He began to

To Mrs. Harriette Brower

cordially

Giuseppe De Luca

study in early youth, became a student of Saint Cecilia in Rome when fifteen years of age, and made his début at about twenty. He has sung in opera ever since.

In 1915,—November 25th to be exact—De Luca came to the Metropolitan, and won instant recognition from critics and public alike. It is said of him that he earned "this success by earnest and intelligent work. Painstaking to a degree, there is no detail of his art that he neglects or slights—so that one hesitates to decide whether he is greater as a singer or as an actor." Perhaps, however, his most important quality is his mastery of *"bel canto"* —pure singing—that art which seems to become constantly rarer on the operatic and concert stage.

"De Luca does such beautiful, finished work; every detail is carefully thought out until it is as perfect as can be." So remarked a member of the Metropolitan, and a fellow artist.

Those who have listened to the Roman baritone in the various rôles he has assumed, have enjoyed his fine voice, his true *bel canto* style, and his versatile dramatic skill. He has never disappointed his public, and more than this, is ever ready to step into the breach should necessity arise.

A man who has at least a hundred and twenty operas at his tongue's end, who has been singing in the greatest opera houses of the world for more than twenty years, will surely have much to tell which can help those who are farther down the line. If he is willing to do so, can speak the vernacular, and can spare a brief hour from the rush of constant study and engagement, a conference will be possible. It was possible, for time was made for it.

THE MUSICAL GIFT

Mr. De Luca, who speaks the English language remarkably well, greeted the writer with easy courtesy. His genial manner makes one feel at home immediately. Although he had just come from the Opera House, where he had sung an important rôle, he seemed as fresh and rested as though nothing had happened.

"I think the ability to act, and also, in a measure, to sing, is a gift," began the artist. "I remember, even as a little child, I was always acting out in pantomime or mimicry what I had seen and felt. If I was taken to the theater, I would come home, place a chair for audience, and act out the whole story I had just

seen before it. From my youngest years I always wanted to sing and act.

A REMARKABLE TEACHER

"As early as I could, at about the age of fifteen, I began to study singing, with a most excellent teacher; who was none other than Signor Wenceslao Persischini, who is now no longer living. He trained no fewer than seventy-four artists, of which I was the last. Battestini, that wonderful singer, whose voice to-day, at the age of sixty-five, is as remarkable as ever, is one of his pupils. We know that if a vocal teacher sings himself, and has faults, his pupils are bound to copy those faults instinctively and unconsciously. With Persischini this could not be the case; for, owing to some throat trouble, he was not able to sing at all. He could only whisper the tones he wanted, accompanying them with signs and facial grimaces." And Mr. De Luca illustrated these points in most amusing fashion. Then he continued:

"But he had unerring judgment, together with the finest ear. He knew perfectly how the tone should be sung and the student was obliged to do it exactly right and must keep at it till it was right. He would let nothing

faulty pass without correction. I also had lessons in acting from Madame Marini, a very good teacher of the art.

THE ARTIST LIFE

"After five years of hard study I made my début at Piacenza, as Valentine, in *Faust,* November 6th, 1897. Then, you may remember, I came to the Metropolitan in the season of 1915–1916, where I have been singing continually ever since.

"The artist should have good health, that he may be always able to sing. He owes this to his public, to be always ready, never to disappoint. I think I have never disappointed an audience and have always been in good voice. It seems to me when one is no longer able to do one's best it is time to stop singing."

"It is because you study constantly and systematically that you are always in good voice."

"Yes, I am always at work. I rise at eight in the morning, not later. Vocalizes are never neglected. I often sing them as I take my bath. Some singers do not see the necessity of doing exercises every day; I am not one of those. I always sing my scales, first with full power, then taking each tone softly, swelling to

full strength, then dying away—in mezza voce. I use many other exercises also—employing full power. English is also one of the daily studies, with lessons three times a week.

CONSTANTLY ON THE WATCH

"When singing a rôle, I am always listening—watching—to be conscious of just what I am doing. I am always criticizing myself. If a tone or a phrase does not sound quite correct to me as to placement, or production, I try to correct the fault at once. I can tell just how I am singing a tone or phrase by the feeling and sensation. Of course I cannot hear the full effect; no singer ever can actually hear the effect of his work, except on the records. There he can learn, for the first time, just how his voice sounds.

LEARNING A NEW RÔLE

"How do I begin a new part? I first read over the words and try to get a general idea of their meaning, and how I would express the ideas. I try over the arias and get an idea of those. Then comes the real work—the memorizing and working out the conception. I first commit the words, and know them so well I can write them out. Next I join them

to the music. So far I have worked by myself. After this much has been done, I call in the accompanist, as I do not play the piano very well; that is to say, my right hand will go but the left lags behind!

ALWAYS BEING SURE OF THE WORDS

"Yes, as you say, it requires constant study to keep the various rôles in review, especially at the Metropolitan, where the operas are changed from day to day. Of course at performance the prompter is always there to give the cue—yet the words must always be in mind. I have never yet forgotten a word or phrase. On one occasion—it was in the *Damnation of Faust,* a part I had already sung a number of times—I thought of a word that was coming, and seemed utterly unable to remember it. I grew quite cold with fear—I am inclined to be a little nervous anyway—but it was quite impossible to think of the word. Luckily at the moment when I needed the word I was so fearful about, it suddenly came to me.

NATURAL ANXIETY

"Of course there is always anxiety for the artist with every public appearance. There

is so much responsibility—one must always be at one's best; and the responsibility increases as one advances, and begins to realize more and more keenly how much is expected and what depends on one's efforts. I can assure you we all feel this, from the least to the greatest. The most famous singers perhaps suffer most keenly.

"I have always sung in Italian opera, in which the language is easy for me. Latterly I have added French operas to my list. *Samson and Delilah,* which I had always done in Italian, I had to relearn in French; this for me was very difficult. I worked a long time on it, but mastered it at last.

"This is my twenty-second season in opera. I have a repertoire of about one hundred and twenty rôles, in most of which I have sung many times in Italy. Some I wish might be brought out at the Metropolitan. Verdi's *Don Carlos,* for instance, has a beautiful baritone part; it is really one of the fine operas, though it might be considered a bit old-fashioned today. Still I think it would be a success here. I am preparing several new parts for this season; one of them is the Tschaikowsky work —*Eugene Onegin.* So you see I am constantly at work.

"My favorite operas? I think they are these"; and Mr. De Luca hastily jotted down the following: *Don Carlos, Don Giovanni, Hamlet, Rigoletto, Barbier, Damnation of Faust,* and last, but not least, *Tannhauser.*

GROWTH OF MUSICAL APPRECIATION IN AMERICA

Asked if he considered appreciation for music had advanced during his residence in America, his answer was emphatically in the affirmative.

"The other evening I attended a reception of representative American society, among whom were many frequenters of the Metropolitan. Many of them spoke to me of the opera *Marouf.* I was surprised, for this modern French opera belongs to the new idiom, and is difficult to understand. 'Do you really like the music of *Marouf?*' I asked. 'Oh, yes indeed,' every one said. It is one of my longest parts, but not one of my special favorites.

"In the summer! Ah, I go back to my beloved Italy almost as soon as the Metropolitan season closes. I could sing in Buenos Aires, as the season there follows the one here. But I prefer to rest the whole time until I return. I feel the singer needs a period of rest each

year. To show you how necessary it is for the singer to do daily work on the voice, I almost feel I cannot sing at all during the summer, as I do no practicing, and without vocalizes one cannot keep in trim. If I am asked to sing during vacation, I generally refuse. I tell them I cannot sing, for I do not practice. It takes me a little while after I return, to get the vocal apparatus in shape again.

"Thus it means constant study, eternal vigilance to attain the goal, then to hold what you have attained and advance beyond it if possible."

VII

LUISA TETRAZZINI

THE COLORATURA VOICE

Luisa Tetrazzini has been called the greatest exponent of coloratura singing that we have at the present time. Her phenomenal successes in various quarters of the globe, where she has been heard in both opera and concert, are well known, and form pages of musical history, full of interest. This remarkable voice, of exquisite quality and development, is another proof that we have as beautiful voices to-day, if we will but realize the fact, as were ever known or heard of in the days of famous Italian songsters.

Portraits often belie the artist, by accentuating, unduly, some individuality of face or figure, and Tetrazzini is no exception. From her pictures one would expect to find one of the imperious, dominating order of prima donnas of the old school. When I met the diva, I was at once struck by the simplicity of her appearance and attire. There was nothing pompous about her; she did not carry herself

Louisa Tetrazzini

with the air of one conscious of possessing something admired and sought after by all the world, something which set her on a high pedestal apart from other singers. Not at all. I saw a little lady of plump, comfortable figure, a face which beamed with kindliness and good humor, a mouth wreathed with smiles. Her manner and speech were equally simple and cordial, so that the visitor was put at ease at once, and felt she had known the great singer for years.

Before the conference could begin a pretty episode happened, which showed the human side of the singer's character, and gave a glimpse into her every day life. Mme. Tetrazzini was a little late for her appointment, as she had been out on a shopping expedition, an occupation which she greatly enjoys. Awaiting her return was a group of photographers, who had arranged their apparatus, mirrors and flash-light screen, even to the piano stool on which the singer was to be placed. She took in the situation at a glance, as she entered, and obediently gave herself into the hands of the picture makers.

"Ah, you wish to make me beautiful," she exclaimed, with her pretty accent; "I am not beautiful, but you may try to make me look

so." With patience she assumed the required poses, put her head on this side or that, drew her furs closer about her or allowed them to fall away from the white throat, with its single string of pearls. The onlooker suggested she be snapped with a little black "Pom," who had found his way into the room and was now an interested spectator, on his vantage ground, a big sofa. So little "Joy" was gathered up and held in affectionate, motherly arms, close against his mistress' face. It was all very human and natural, and gave another side to the singer's character from the side she shows to the public.

At last the ordeal was over, and Madame was free to leave her post and sit in one of the arm chairs, where she could be a little more comfortable. The secretary was also near, to be appealed to when she could not make herself intelligible in English. "My English is very bad," she protested; "I have not the time now to learn it properly; that is why I speak it so very bad. In the summer, or next year, I will really learn it. Now, what is it I can tell you? I am ready."

FOR THE DÉBUTANTE

To ask such a natural born singer how she studies and works, is like asking the fish swimming about in the ocean, to tell you where is the sea! She could not tell you how she does it. Singing is as the breath of life to Tetrazzini—as natural as the air she breathes. Realizing this, I began at the other end.

"What message have you, Madame, for the young singer, who desires to make a career?"

"Ah, yes, the débutante. Tell her she must practice much—very much—" and Madame spread out her hands to indicate it was a large subject; "she must practice several hours every day. I had to practice very much when I began my study—when I was sixteen; but now I do not have to spend much time on scales and exercises; they pretty well go of themselves"; and she smiled sweetly.

"You say," she continued, "the débutante —the young singer—does not know—in America—how much she needs the foreign languages. But she should learn them. She should study French, Italian and Spanish, and know how to speak them. Because, if she should travel to those countries, she must make herself understood, and she must be able to sing in those languages, too.

"Besides the languages, it is very good for her to study piano also; she need not know it so well as if she would be a pianist, but she should know it a little; yet it is better to know more of the piano—it will make her a better musician."

THE COLORATURA VOICE

"You love the coloratura music, do you not, Madame?"

"Ah, yes, I love the coloratura,—it suits me; I have always studied for that—I know all the old Italian operas. For the coloratura music you must make the voice sound high and sweet —like a bird—singing and soaring. You think my voice sounds something like Patti's? Maybe. She said so herself. Ah, Patti was my dear friend—my very dear friend—I loved her dearly. She only sang the coloratura music, thought she loved Wagner and dramatic music. Not long before she died she said to me: 'Luisa, always keep to the coloratura music, and the beautiful *bel canto* singing; do nothing to strain your voice; preserve its velvety quality.' Patti's voice went to C sharp, in later years; mine has several tones higher. In the great aria in Lucia, she used to substitute a trill at the end instead of the top

notes; but she said to me—'Luisa, *you* can sing the high notes!' "

"Then the breathing, Madame, what would you say of that?"

"Ah, the breathing, that is very important indeed. You must breathe from here, you know—what you call it—from the diaphragm, and from both sides; it is like a bellows, going in and out," and she touched the portions referred to. "One does not sing from the chest, —that would make queer, harsh tones." She sang a few tones just to show how harsh they would be.

"You have shown such wonderful breath control in the way you sustain high tones, beginning them softly, swelling then diminishing them."

"Ah, yes, the coloratura voice must always be able to do those things," was the answer.

"Should you ever care to become a dramatic singer?" she was asked.

Tetrazzini grew thoughtful; "No, I do not think so," she said, after a pause; "I love my coloratura music, and I think my audience likes it too; it goes to the heart—it is all melody, and that is what people like. I sing lyric music also—I am fond of that."

"Yes, and you sing songs in English, with

such good diction, that we can all understand you—almost every word."

Madame beamed.

"I promise you I will learn English better next year; for I shall come back to my friends in America next autumn. I shall be in Italy in the summer. I have two homes over there, one in Italy and one in Switzerland.

"Do I prefer to sing in opera or concert, you ask? I believe I like concert much better, for many reasons. I get nearer to the audience; I am freer—much freer, and can be myself and not some other person. There is no change of costume, either; I wear one gown, so it is easier; yes, I like it much more.

"In traveling over your big country—you see I have just been out to California and back—I find your people have advanced so very much in appreciation of music; you know so much more than when I was here before; that was indeed a long time ago—about twelve years,—" and Madame made a pretty little gesture.

"But in one way your great big country has scarcely advanced any if at all; you have not advanced in providing opera for your music lovers. You need permanent opera companies in all the larger cities. The opera companies

of New York and Chicago are fine, oh yes,—but they cannot give opera to the whole country. There are a few traveling companies too, which are good. But what are they in your big country? You should have opera stock companies all over, which would give opera for the people. Then your fine American girls would have the chance to gain operatic experience in their own country, which they cannot get now. That is why the foreign singer has such a chance here, and that is why the native singer can hardly get a chance. All the American girls' eyes turn with longing to the Metropolitan Opera House; and with the best intentions in the world the Director can only engage a small number of those he would like to have, because he has no room for them. He can not help it. So I say, that while your people have grown so much in the liking and in the understanding of music, you do not grow on this side, because your young singers are obliged to travel to a foreign land to get the practice in opera they are unable to get at home. You need to do more for the permanent establishing of opera in the large and small cities of your country."

Madame did not express her thoughts quite as consecutively as I have set them down, but

I am sure she will approve, as these are her ideas of the musical situation in this country.

As I listened to the words of this "second Patti," as she is called, and learned of her kindly deeds, I was as much impressed by her kindness of heart as I had been by her beautiful art of song. She does much to relieve poverty and suffering wherever she finds it. As a result of her "vocal mastery," she has been able to found a hospital in Italy for victims of tuberculosis, which accommodates between three and four hundred patients. The whole institution is maintained from her own private income. During the war she generously gave of her time and art to sing for the soldiers and aided the cause of the Allies and the Red Cross whenever possible. For her labors of love in this direction, she has the distinction of being decorated by a special gold medal of honor, by both the French and Italian Governments; a distinction only conferred on two others beside herself.

After our conference, I thanked her for giving me an hour from her crowded day. She took my hand and pressed it warmly in both hers.

"Please do not quite forget me, Madame."

"Indeed not, will you forget me?"

"No, I shall always remember this delightful hour."

"Then, you see, I cannot forget you!" and she gave my hand a parting squeeze.

VIII

ANTONIO SCOTTI

TRAINING AMERICAN SINGERS FOR OPERA

A SINGER of finished art and ripe experience is Antonio Scotti. His operatic career has been rich in development, and he stands to-day at the top of the ladder, as one of the most admired dramatic baritones of our time.

One of Naples' sons, he made a first appearance on the stage at Malta, in 1889. Successful engagements in Milan, Rome, Madrid, Russia and Buenos Aires followed. In 1899 he came to London, singing *Don Giovanni* at Covent Garden. A few months thereafter, he came to New York and began his first season at the Metropolitan. His vocal and histrionic gifts won instant recognition here and for the past twenty years he has been one of the most dependable artists of each regular season.

CHARACTERIZATION

With all his varied endowments, it seldom or never falls to the lot of a baritone to impersonate the lover; on the contrary it seems

To Miss
Henriette Brower
Cordially
New York
1920

to be his métier to portray the villain. Scotti has been forced to hide his true personality behind the mask of a Scarpia, a Tonio, an Iago, and last but not least, the most repulsive yet subtle of all his villains—Chim-Fang, in *L'Oracolo*. Perhaps the most famous of them all is Scarpia. But what a Scarpia, the quintessence of the polished, elegant knave! The refinement of Mr. Scotti's art gives to each rôle distinct characteristics which separate it from all the others.

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE AMERICAN SINGER

Mr. Scotti has done and is doing much for the young American singer, by not only drilling the inexperienced ones, but also by giving them opportunity to appear in opera on tour. To begin this enterprise, the great baritone turned impresario, engaged a company of young singers, most of them Americans, and, when his season at the Metropolitan was at an end, took this company, at his own expense, on a southern trip, giving opera in many cities.

Discussing his venture on one occasion, Mr. Scotti said:

"It was an experiment in several ways. First, I had an all-American company, which

was indeed an experiment. I had some fine artists in the principal rôles, with lesser known ones in smaller parts. With these I worked personally, teaching them how to act, thus preparing them for further career in the field of opera. I like to work with the younger and less experienced ones, for it gives me real pleasure to watch how they improve, when they have the opportunity.

"Of course I am obliged to choose my material carefully, for many more apply for places than I can ever accept.

ITALIAN OPERA IN AMERICA

"So closely is Italy identified with all that pertains to opera," he continued, "that the question of the future of Italian opera in America interests me immensely. It has been my privilege to devote some of the best years of my life to singing in Italian opera in this wonderful country of yours. One is continually impressed with the great advance America has made and is making along all musical lines. It is marvelous, though you who live here may not be awake to the fact. Musicians in Europe and other parts of the world, who have never been here, can form no conception of the musical activities here.

"It is very gratifying to me, as an Italian, to realize that the operatic compositions of my country must play an important part in the future of American musical art. It seems to me there is more intrinsic value—more variety in the works of modern Italian composers than in those of other nations. We know the operas of Mozart are largely founded on Italian models.

"Of the great modern Italian composers, I feel that Puccini is the most important, because he has a more intimate appreciation of theatrical values. He seems to know just what kind of music will fit a series of words or a scene, which will best bring out the dramatic sense. Montemezzi is also very great in this respect. This in no way detracts from what Mascagni, Leoncavallo and others have accomplished. It is only my personal estimate of Puccini as a composer. The two most popular operas today are *Aïda* and *Madame Butterfly,* and they will always draw large audiences, although American people are prone to attend the opera for the purpose of hearing some particular singer and not for the sake of the work of the composer. In other countries this is not so often the case. We must hope this condition will be overcome in due time, for the reason

that it now often happens that good performances are missed by the public who are only attracted when some much heralded celebrity sings."

AMERICAN COMPOSERS

Asked for his views regarding American operatic composers, Mr. Scotti said:

"American composers often spoil their chances of success by selecting uninteresting and uninspired stories, which either describe some doleful historic incident or illustrate some Indian legend, in which no one of to-day is interested, and which is so far removed from actual life that it becomes at once artificial, academic and preposterous. Puccini spends years searching for suitable librettos, as great composers have always done. When he finds a story that is worthy he turns it into an opera. But he will wait till he discovers the right kind of a plot. No wonder he has success. In writing modern music dramas, as all young Americans endeavor to do, they will never be successful unless they are careful to pick out really dramatic stories to set to music."

OPERATIC TRAINING

On a certain occasion I had an opportunity to confer with this popular baritone, and learn

more in regard to his experiences as impresario. This meeting was held in the little back office of the Metropolitan, a tiny spot, which should be—and doubtless is—dear to every member of the company. Those four walls, if they would speak, could tell many interesting stories of singers and musicians, famed in the world of art and letters, who daily pass through its doors, or sit chatting on its worn leather-covered benches, exchanging views on this performance or that, or on the desirability or difficulty of certain rôles. Even while we were in earnest conference, Director Gatti-Casazza passed through the room, stopping long enough to say a pleasant word and offer a clasp of the hand. Mr. Guard, too, flitted by in haste, but had time to give a friendly greeting.

Mr. Scotti was in genial mood and spoke with enthusiasm of his activities with a favorite project—his own opera company. To the question as to whether he found young American singers in too great haste to come before the public, before they were sufficiently prepared, thus proving they were superficial in their studies, he replied:

"No, I do not find this to be the case. As a general rule, young American singers have a good foundation to build upon. They have

good voices to start with; they are eager to learn and they study carefully. What they lack most—those who go in for opera I mean—is stage routine and a knowledge of acting. This, as I have said before, I try to give them. I do not give lessons in singing to these young aspirants, as I might in this way gain the enmity of vocal teachers; but I help the untried singers to act their parts. Of course all depends on the mentality—how long a process of training the singer needs. The coloratura requires more time to perfect this manner of singing than others need; but some are much quicker at it than others.

"It is well I am blessed with good health, as my task is extremely arduous. When on tour, I sing every night, besides constantly rehearsing my company. We are ninety in all, including our orchestra. It is indeed a great undertaking. I do not do it for money, for I make nothing personally out of it, and you can imagine how heavy the expenses are; four thousand dollars a week, merely for transportation. But I do it for the sake of art, and to spread the love of modern Italian opera over this great, wonderful country, the greatest country for music that exists to-day. And the plan succeeds far beyond my hopes; for

where we gave one performance in a place, we now, on our second visit, can give three—four. Next year we shall go to California.

"So we are doing our part, both to aid the young singer who sorely needs experience and to educate the masses and general public to love what is best in modern Italian opera!"

IX

ROSA RAISA

PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE WIN RESULTS

To the present day opera goers the name of Rosa Raisa stands for a compelling force. In whatever rôle she appears, she is always a commanding figure, both physically, dramatically and musically. Her feeling for dramatic climax, the intensity with which she projects each character assumed, the sincerity and self forgetfulness of her naturalistic interpretation, make every rôle notable. Her voice is a rich, powerful soprano, vibrantly sweet when at its softest—like a rushing torrent of passion in intense moments. At such moments the listener is impressed with the belief that power and depth of tone are limitless; that the singer can never come to the end of her resources, no matter how deeply she may draw on them. There are such moments of tragic intensity, in her impersonation of the heroine in *Jewels of the Madonna,* in *Sister Angelica,* in *Norma,* as the avenging priestess, in which

Rosa Raisa

rôle she has recently created such a remarkable impression.

A PRIMA DONNA AT HOME

If one has pictured to one's self that because the Russian prima donna can show herself a whirlwind of dynamic passion on the stage, therefore she must show some of these qualities in private life, one would quickly become disabused of such an impression when face to face with the artist. One would then meet a slender, graceful young woman, of gentle presence and with the simplest manners in the world. The dark, liquid eyes look at one with frankness and sincerity; the wide, low brow, from which the dark hair is softly drawn away, is the brow of a madonna. In repose the features might easily belong to one of Raphael's saints. However, they light up genially when their owner speaks.

Mme. Raisa stood in the doorway of her New York apartment, ready to greet us as we were shown the way to her. Her figure, clad in close-fitting black velvet, looked especially slender; her manner was kind and gracious, and we were soon seated in her large, comfortable salon, deep in conference. Before we had really begun, the singer's pet dog came

bounding to greet us from another room. The tiny creature, a Mexican terrier, was most affectionate, yet very gentle withal, and content to quietly cuddle down and listen to the conversation.

"I will speak somewhat softly," began Mme. Raisa, "since speaking seems to tire me much more than singing, for what reason I do not know. We singers must think a little of our physical well being, you see. This means keeping regular hours, living very simply and taking a moderate amount of exercise.

"Yes, I always loved to sing; even as a little child I was constantly singing. And so I began to have singing lessons when I was eight years old. Later on I went to Italy and lived there for a number of years, until I began to travel. I now make my home in Naples. My teacher there was Madame Marchesio, who was a remarkable singer, musician and teacher—all three. Even when she reached the advanced age of eighty, she could still sing wonderfully well. She had the real *bel canto,* understood the voice, how to use it and the best way to preserve it. I owe so much to her careful, artistic training; almost everything, I may say.

THE SINGER'S LIFE

"One cannot expect to succeed in the profession of music without giving one's best time and thought to the work of vocal training and all the other subjects that go with it. A man in business gives his day, or the most of it, to his office. My time is devoted to my art, and indeed I have not any too much time to study all the necessary sides of it.

"During the season, I do regular vocal practice each day and keep the various rôles in review. During the summer I study new parts, for then I have the time and the quiet. That is what the singer needs—quiet. I always return to Naples for the vacation, unless I go to South America and sing there. Then I must have a little rest too, that I may be ready for the labors of the following season.

VOCAL TRAINING

"Even during the busiest days technic practice is never neglected. Vocalizes, scales, terzetta—what you call them—broken thirds, yes, and long, slow tones in *mezza di voce,* that is, beginning softly, swelling to loud then gradually diminishing to soft, are part of the daily régime. One cannot omit these things if one

would always keep in condition and readiness. When at work in daily study, I sing softly, or with medium tone quality; I do not use full voice except occasionally, when I am going through a part and wish to try out certain effects.

"ONE VOICE"

"I was trained first as a coloratura and taught to do all the old Italian operas of Bellini, Rosini, Donizetti and the rest of the florid Italian school. This gives the singer a thorough, solid training—the sort of training that requires eight or ten years to accomplish. But this is not too much time to give, if one wishes to be thoroughly prepared to sing all styles of music. In former days, when singers realized the necessity of being prepared in this way, there existed I might say—*one voice;* for the soprano voice was trained to sing both florid and dramatic music. But in these days sopranos are divided into High, Lyric, Coloratura and Dramatic; singers choose which of these lines seems to suit best their voice and temperament.

COLORATURA AND DRAMATIC

"It is of advantage to the singer to be trained in both these arts. In the smaller opera

houses of Italy, a soprano, if thus trained, can sing *Lucia* one night and *Norma* the next; *Traviata* one night and *Trovatore* the next.

"Modern Italian opera calls for the dramatic soprano. She must be an actress just as well as a singer. She must be able to express in both voice and gesture intense passion and emotion. It is the period of storm and stress. Coloratura voices have not so much opportunity at the present time, unless they are quite out of the ordinary. And yet, for me, a singer who has mastery of the beautiful art of *bel canto,* is a great joy. Galli-Curci's art is the highest I know of. For me she is the greatest singer. Melba also is wonderful. I have heard her often—she has been very kind to me. When I hear her sing an old Italian air, with those pure, bell-like tones of hers, I am lifted far up; I feel myself above the sky.

DO NOT YIELD TO DISCOURAGEMENT

"The younger singer need not yield to discouragement, for she must know from the start, that the mastery of a great art like singing is a long and arduous task. If the work seems too difficult at times, do not give up or say 'I cannot.' If I had done that, I should have

really given up many times. Instead I say; 'I can do it, and not only I can but I will!'

MUSICIANSHIP

"There are so many sides to the singer's equipment, besides singing itself"; and Mme. Raisa lifted dark eyes and spread out her graceful hands as though to indicate the bigness of the subject. "Yes, there is the piano, for instance; the singer is much handicapped without a knowledge of that instrument, for it not only provides accompaniment but cultivates the musical sense. Of course I have learned the piano and I consider it necessary for the singer.

"Then there are languages. Be not content with your own, though that language must be perfectly learned and expressed, but learn others."

"You of course speak several languages?" questioned the listener.

"Yes, I speak eight," she answered modestly. "Russian, of course, for I am Russian; then French, Italian, German, Spanish, Polish, Roumanian and English. Besides these I am familiar with a few dialects.

HAVE PATIENCE

"So many young singers are so impatient; they want to prepare themselves in three or four years for a career," and Madame frowned her disapproval. "Perhaps they may come before the public after that length of time spent in study; but they will only know a part—a little of all they ought to know. With a longer time, conscientiously used, they would be far better equipped. The singer who spends nine or ten years in preparation, who is trained to sing florid parts as well as those which are dramatic—she indeed can sing anything, the music of the old school as well as of the new. In Rome I gave a recital of old music, assisted by members of the Sistine Chapel choir. We gave much old music, some of it dating from the sixth century.

"Do I always feel the emotions I express when singing a rôle? Yes, I can say that I endeavor to throw myself absolutely into the part I am portraying; but that I always do so with equal success cannot be expected. So many unforeseen occurrences may interfere, which the audience can never know or consider. One may not be exactly in the mood, or in the best of voice; the house may not be a congenial

space, or the audience is unsympathetic. But if all is propitious and the audience with you—then you are lifted up and carry every one with you. Then you are inspired and petty annoyances are quite forgotten.

VOCAL MASTERY

"You ask a very difficult question when you ask of what vocal mastery consists. If I have developed perfect control throughout the two and a half octaves of my voice, can make each tone with pure quality and perfect evenness in the different degrees of loud and soft, and if I have perfect breath control as well, I then have an equipment that may serve all purposes of interpretation.

"Together with vocal mastery must go the art of interpretation, in which all the mastery of the vocal equipment may find expression. In order to interpret adequately one ought to possess a perfect instrument, perfectly trained. When this is the case one can forget mechanism, because confident of the ability to express whatever emotion is desired."

"Have you a message which may be carried to the young singers?" she was asked.

"Tell them to have patience—patience to work and patience to wait for results. Vocal

mastery is not a thing that can be quickly accomplished; it is not the work of weeks and months, but of years of consistent, constant effort. It cannot be hurried, but must grow with one's growth, both mentally and physically. But the reward of earnest effort is sure to come!"

X

LOUISE HOMER

THE REQUIREMENTS OF A MUSICAL CAREER

Madame Louise Homer is a native artist to whom every loyal American can point with pardonable pride. Her career has been a constant, steady ascent, from the start; it is a career so well known in America that there is hardly any need to review it, except as she herself refers to it on the rare occasions when she is induced to speak of herself. For Mme. Homer is one of the most modest artists in the world; nothing is more distasteful to her than to seek for publicity through ordinary channels. So averse is she to any self-seeking that it was with considerable hesitation that she consented to express her views to the writer, on the singer's art. As Mr. Sidney Homer, the well known composer and husband of Mme. Homer, remarked, the writer should prize this intimate talk, as it was the first Mme. Homer had granted in a very long time.

The artist had lately returned from a long

Louise Homer

trip, crowded with many concerts, when I called at the New York residence of this ideal musical pair and their charming family. Mme. Homer was at home and sent down word she would see me shortly. In the few moments of waiting, I seemed to feel the genial atmosphere of this home, its quiet and cheer. A distant tinkle of girlish laughter was borne to me once or twice; then a phrase or two sung by a rich, vibrant voice above; then in a moment after, the artist herself descended and greeted me cordially.

"We will have a cup of tea before we start in to talk," she said, and, as if by magic, the tea tray and dainty muffins appeared.

How wholesome and fresh she looked, with the ruddy color in her cheeks and the firm whiteness of neck and arms. The Japanese robe of "midnight blue," embroidered in yellows, heightened the impression of vigorous health by its becomingness.

FOR THE GIRL WHO WANTS TO MAKE A CAREER

"There is so much to consider for the girl who desires to enter the profession," began Mme. Homer, in response to my first query. "First, she must have a voice, there is no use

attempting a career without the voice; there must be something to develop, something worth while to build upon. And if she has the voice and the means to study, she must make up her mind to devote herself exclusively to her art; there is no other way to succeed. She cannot enter society, go to luncheons, dinners and out in the evening, and at the same time accomplish much in the way of musical development. Many girls think, if they attend two or three voice lessons a week and learn some songs and a few operatic arias, that is all there is to it. But there is far more. They must know many other things. The vocal student should study piano and languages; these are really essential. Not that she should strive to become a pianist; that would not be possible if she is destined to become a singer; but the more she knows of the piano and its literature, the more this will cultivate her musical sense and develop her taste.

HOW AN ARTIST WORKS

"I am always studying, always striving to improve what I have already learned and trying to acquire the things I find difficult, or that I have not yet attained to. I do vocal technic every day; this is absolutely essential,

while one is in the harness. It is during the winter that I work so industriously, both on technic and repertoire, between tours. This is when I study. I believe in resting the voice part of the year, and I take this rest in the summer. Then, for a time, I do not sing at all. I try to forget there is such a thing as music in the world, so far as studying it is concerned. Of course I try over Mr. Homer's new songs, when they are finished, for summer is his time for composition.

"Since the voice is such an intangible instrument, the singer needs regular guidance and criticism, no matter how advanced she may be. As you say, it is difficult for the singer to determine the full effect of her work; she often thinks it much better than it really is. That is human nature, isn't it?" she added with one of her charming smiles.

THE START IN OPERA

"How did you start upon an operatic career?" the singer was asked.

Just here Mr. Homer entered and joined in the conference.

"I do not desire to go into my life-history, as that would take too long. In a few words, this is how it happened—years ago.

"We were living in Boston; I had a church position, so we were each busy with our musical work. My voice was said to be 'glorious,' but it was a cumbersome, unwieldy organ. I could only sing up to F; there were so many things I wanted to do with my voice that seemed impossible, that I realized I needed more training. I could have remained where I was; the church people were quite satisfied, and I sang in concert whenever opportunity offered. But something within urged me on. We decided to take a year off and spend it in study abroad. Paris was then the Mecca for singers and to Paris we went. I plunged at once into absorbing study; daily lessons in voice training and repertoire; languages, and French diction, several times a week, and soon acting was added, for every one said my voice was for the theater. I had no idea, when I started out, that I should go into opera. I had always loved to sing, as far back as I can remember. My father was a Presbyterian clergyman, and when we needed new hymn books for church or Sunday School, they used to come to our house. I would get hold of every hymn book I could find and learn the music. So I was always singing; but an operatic career never entered my thought, un-

til the prospect seemed to unfold before me, as a result of my arduous study in Paris. Of course I began to learn important arias from the operas. Every contralto aspires to sing the grand air from the last act of *Le Prophete;* you know it of course. I told my teacher I could never do it, as it demanded higher tones than I had acquired, going up to C. He assured me it would be perfectly easy in a little while, if I would spend a few moments daily on those high notes. His prediction was correct, for in a few months I had no trouble with the top notes.

"I studied stage deportment and acting from one of the greatest singing actors of the French stage, Paul Lherie. What an artist he was! So subtle, so penetrating, so comprehensive. The principles he taught are a constant help to me now, and his remarks often come back to me as I study a new rôle.

"As I say, I studied this line of work, not knowing what would grow out of it; I did it on faith, hoping that it might prove useful."

"It seems to me," remarked the composer, "that young singers would do well to make a study of acting, along with languages and piano. Then, if the voice developed and an operatic career opened to them, they would be

so much better prepared; they would have made a start in the right direction; there would not be so much to learn all at once, later on."

"If the girl could only be sure she was destined for a stage career," said Mme. Homer, thoughtfully, "she might do many things from the start that she doesn't think of doing before she knows.

"To go on with my Paris story. I kept faithfully at work for a year, preparing myself for I knew not just what; I could not guess what was in store. Then I got my first opera engagement, quite unexpectedly. I was singing for some professional friends in a large *saale.* I noticed a man standing with his back to me, looking out of one of the long windows. When I finished, he came forward and offered me an engagement at Vichy, for the summer season. The name Vichy only suggested to my mind a kind of beverage. Now I learned the town had a flourishing Opera House, and I was expected to sing eight rôles. Thus my stage career began."

WHAT ARE THE ASSETS FOR A CAREER?

"And what must the girl possess, who wishes to make a success with her singing?" was asked.

"First of all, as I have already said, she

must have a voice; she can never expect to get very far without that. Voice is a necessity for a singer, but it rests with her what she will do with it, how she will develop it.

"The next asset is intelligence; that is as great a necessity as a voice. For through the voice we express what we feel, what we are; intelligence controls, directs, shines through and illumines everything. Indeed what can be done without intelligence? I could mention a young singer with a good natural voice, who takes her tones correctly, who studies well; indeed one can find no fault with the technical side of her work; but her singing has no meaning—it says absolutely nothing; it only represents just so many notes."

"That is because she has not a musical nature," put in Mr. Homer. "To my mind that is the greatest asset any one can have who wishes to become a musician in any branch of the art. What can be done without a musical nature? Of course I speak of the young singer who wishes to make a career. There are many young people who take up singing for their own pleasure, never expecting to do much with it. And it is a good thing to do so. It gives pleasure to their family and friends —is a healthful exercise, and last but not least,

is financially good for the teacher they employ.

"But the trouble comes when these superficial students aspire to become opera singers, after a couple of seasons' study. Of course they all cast eyes at the Metropolitan, as the end and aim of all striving.

"Just as if, when a young man enters a law office, it is going to lead him to the White House, or that he expects it will," said Mr. Homer.

"Then," resumed the artist, "we have already three requirements for a vocal career; Voice, Intelligence and a Musical Nature. I think the Fourth should be a Capacity for Work. Without application, the gifts of voice, intelligence and a musical nature will not make an artist. To accomplish this task requires ceaseless labor, without yielding to discouragement. Perhaps the Fifth asset would be a cheerful optimism as proof against discouragement.

"That is the last thing the student should yield to—discouragement, for this has stunted or impaired the growth of many singers possessed of natural talent. The young singer must never be down-hearted. Suppose things do not go as she would like to have them; she must learn to overcome obstacles, not be over-

come by them. She must have backbone enough to stand up under disappointments; they are the test of her mettle, of her worthiness to enter the circle with those who have overcome. For she can be sure that none of us have risen to a place in art without the hardest kind of work, struggle and the conquering of all sorts of difficulties.

"The sixth asset ought to be Patience, for she will need that in large measure. It is only with patient striving, doing the daily vocal task, and trying to do it each day a little better than the day before, that anything worth while is accomplished. It is a work that cannot be hurried. I repeat it; the student must have unlimited patience to labor and wait for results.

COLORATURA AND DRAMATIC

"I would advise every student to study coloratura first. Then, as the voice broadens, deepens and takes on a richer timbre, it will turn naturally to the more dramatic expression. The voice needs this background, or foundation in the old Italian music, in order to acquire flexibility and freedom. I was not trained to follow this plan myself, but my daughter Louise, who is just starting out in

her public career, has been brought up to this idea, which seems to me the best.

MEMORIZING

"I memorize very easily, learning both words and music at the same time. In taking up a new rôle, my accompanist plays it for me and we go over it carefully noting all there is in language and notes. When I can take it to bed with me, and go over it mentally; when I can go through it as I walk along the street, then it has become a part of me; then I can feel I know it."

"Mme. Homer holds the banner at the Metropolitan, for rapid memorizing," said her husband. "On one occasion, when *Das Rheingold* was announced for an evening performance, the Fricka was suddenly indisposed and unable to appear. Early in the afternoon, the Director came to Mme. Homer, begging her to do the part, as otherwise he would be forced to close the house that night. A singer had tried all forenoon to learn the rôle, but had now given it up as impossible. Mme. Homer consented. She started in at three o'clock and worked till six, went on in the evening, sang the part without rehearsal, and acquitted herself with credit. This record has

never been surpassed at the Metropolitan."

"I knew the other Frickas of the Ring," said Madame, "but had never learned the one in the *Rheingold;* it is full of short phrases and difficult to remember, but I came through all right. I may add, as you ask, that perhaps *Orfeo* is my favorite rôle, one of the most beautiful works we have."

VOCAL MASTERY

"What do I understand by Vocal Mastery? The words explain themselves. The singer must master all difficulties of technic, of tone production, so as to be able to express the thought of the composer, and the meaning of the music."

"Don't forget that the singer must have a musical nature," added Mr. Homer, "for without this true vocal mastery is impossible."

XI

GIOVANNI MARTINELLI

"LET US HAVE PLENTY OF OPERA IN AMERICA"

Said the Professor: "How well I remember the first time I heard Martinelli. We were traveling in Italy that summer, and had arrived in Verona rather late in the afternoon. The city seemed full of people, with many strangers, and we could not at first secure accommodations at the hotel. Inquiring the cause, the answer was: 'Does not the signor know that to-day is one holiday, and to-night, in the Amphitheater, *Aïda* will be sung, under the stars.' We finally secured rooms, and of course heard the opera that night. Young Martinelli was the Rhadames, and I shall never forget how splendidly his voice rang out over those vast spaces of the Arena. It was a most unusual experience to hear that music sung in the open—'under the stars,' and it was unforgettable."

Giovanni Martinelli, who has been for sev-

Giovanni Martinelli

eral years one of the leading tenors at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, has warmly entrenched himself in the hearts of music lovers in America. To be a great singer, as some one has said, requires, first, voice; second, voice; third, voice. However, at the present hour a great singer must have more than voice; we demand histrionic ability also. We want singing actors as well as great singers.

Mr. Martinelli is the possessor of a beautiful voice and, moreover, is a fine actor and an excellent musician. He was, first of all, a clarinetist before he became a singer, and so well did he play his chosen instrument that his services were in great demand in his home town in Italy. Then it was discovered he had a voice and he was told he could make a far greater success with that voice than he ever could playing the clarinet. He set to work at once to cultivate the voice in serious earnest and under good instruction. After a considerable time devoted to study, he made his début in Milan, in Verdi's *Ernani*. His success won an engagement at Covent Garden and for Monte Carlo.

A visit to the singer's New York home is a most interesting experience. He has chosen

apartments perched high above the great artery of the city's life—Broadway. From the many sun-flooded windows magnificent views of avenue, river and sky are visible, while at night the electrical glamour that meets the eye is fairy-like. It is a sightly spot and must remind the singer of his own sun lighted atmosphere at home.

The visitor was welcomed with simple courtesy by a kindly, unaffected gentleman, who insists he cannot speak "your English," but who, in spite of this assertion, succeeds in making himself excellently well understood. One feels his is a mentality that will labor for an object and will attain it through force of effort. There is determination in the firm mouth, which smiles so pleasantly when speaking; the thoughtful brow and serious eyes add their share to the forceful personality. The Titian-tinted hair indicates, it is said, a birthplace in northern Italy. This is quite true in the case of Mr. Martinelli, as he comes from a village not far from Padua and but fifty miles from Venice—the little town of Montagnana.

DAILY STUDY

"You ask about my daily routine of study. In the morning I practice exercises and vocal-

izes for one hour. These put the voice in good condition, tune up the vocal chords and oil up the mechanism, so to speak. After this I work on repertoire for another hour. I always practice with full voice, as with half voice I would not derive the benefit I need. At rehearsals I use half voice, but not when I study. In the afternoon I work another hour, this time with my accompanist; for I do not play the piano myself, only just enough to assist the voice with a few chords. This régime gives me three hours' regular study, which seems to me quite sufficient. The voice is not like the fingers of a pianist, for they can be used without limit. If we would keep the voice at its best, we must take care not to overwork it.

TREATMENT OF THE VOICE

"In regard to the treatment of the voice, each singer must work out his own salvation. A great teacher—one who understands his own voice and can sing as well as teach—may tell how he does things, may explain how he treats the voice, may demonstrate to the student his manner of executing a certain phrase or passage, or of interpreting a song. But when this is done he can do little more for the student, for each person has a different mentality and a

different quality of voice—indeed there are as many qualities of voice as there are people. After general principles are thoroughly understood, a singer must work them out according to his own ability. This does not mean that he cannot be guided and helped by the greater experience of a master higher up, who can always criticize the *result* of what the student is trying to do. The voice is a hidden instrument, and eventually its fate must rest with its possessor.

A NEW RÔLE

"When I take up a new part I read the book very carefully to get a thorough idea of the story, the plot and the characters. Then comes the study of my own part, of which I memorize the words first of all. As soon as the words are committed I begin on the music. When these are both well in hand, work with the accompanist follows.

"I have many tenor rôles in my repertoire and am working on others. If you ask for my favorite opera, or operas, I would answer, as most Italians would do, that I enjoy singing the music of Verdi more than that of any composer. I love his *Aïda* perhaps best of all. *Ernani* is a beautiful opera, but

maybe would be thought too old-fashioned for New York. I sing various rôles in French as well as Italian—*Faust, Sans Gene,* and many more. In Italy we know Wagner very well—*Lohengrin, Tannhauser, Tristan* and *Meistersinger,*—but of course they are always sung in Italian.

OPERA IN EVERY CITY

"The Metropolitan is one of the greatest opera houses in the world—but it is only *one.* You have a wonderful country, yet most of its cities must do without opera. Do not forget that in Italy every city and town has its opera house and its season of opera, lasting ten weeks or more. Of course the works are not elaborately produced, the singers may not be so great or high-salaried, but the people are being educated to know and love the best opera music. Performances are given Wednesdays and Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays; the singers resting the days between. They need to as they are obliged to sing at every performance.

"Ah, if you would follow some such plan in America! It would create a great love for good music in the smaller cities and towns where people hear so little, and so seldom this

kind of music. You do so much for music in every other style, but not for opera. Of course I must except the half dozen cities large enough and rich enough to be favored with a season of extended operatic performances; these are the real music centers of your country.

"I will show you what we do for opera in Italy. Here is an Italian musical journal, which I have just received." Mr. Martinelli took up a single-sheet newspaper which lay upon his desk. "You will find all the large cities and most of the small ones reported here. Accordingly, accounts are given of what works are being performed, what artists are singing and where, and how long each season will last. Thus we can glance over the whole field and keep in touch with every singer. Naturally, the time and length of the seasons of performance differ widely in the different places. Thus a singer of reputation can make engagements in various places, then go from one town to another in a complete tour, without conflicting.

"I have had the pleasure of singing a number of seasons at the Metropolitan. During the summer I do not always go back to Italy when the season is over here; last year I

sang in Buenos Aires. This keeps me at work the whole year. Buenos Aires is a beautiful city, and reminds one of Milan. Yes, I like New York. It is more commercial, of course, but I have grown accustomed to that side of it."

As the visitor was leaving, courteously conducted through the corridor by Mr. Martinelli, a small chariot was encountered, crammed with dolls and toys, the whole belonging to little Miss Martinelli, aged eleven months.

"Shall you make a singer of the little lady?" the artist was asked.

"Ah, no; one singer in a family is enough," was the quick response. "But who can tell? It may so happen, after all."

XII

ANNA CASE

INSPIRED INTERPRETATION

Anna Case, known from one end of our land to the other, in song recital, is surely one hundred per cent. American. She was born in the little State of New Jersey, and received her entire vocal training right here in New York City, of a single teacher. No running about from one instructor to another, "getting points" from each, for this singer. She knew from the first moment that she had found the right teacher, one who understood her, what she wanted to do, and could bring her to the goal.

And when one has discovered just the right person to develop talent, one should have the good sense and loyalty to stick to that person. This is exactly what Miss Case has done, for along with other gifts she has the best gift of all—common sense. "Mme. Ostrom-Renard has been my only teacher," she says; "whatever I am or have accomplished I owe entirely to her. She has done everything for me; I feel she is the most wonderful teacher in the world."

Anna Case

A life of constant travel and almost daily concerts and recitals, lies before Miss Case from early in the Autumn to the end of Spring, with but a few breathing places here and there, between the tours, when she returns home to rest up.

During one of these oases it was a pleasant experience to meet and talk with the charming young singer, in her cozy New York apartment. She had just come in from a six weeks' trip, which had included concerts in Texas and Mexico, where the usual success had attended her everywhere.

It must surely give a sense of relief to know that the quiet home is awaiting one's return; that there are to be found one's favorite books, music, piano, the silken divan, soft lights, pictures,—all the familiar comforts one is deprived of on the road.

The visitor, coming in from the biting winds without, was impressed with the comfort and warmth of the small salon, as the mistress of it entered. Clad in soft draperies of dull blue, which but thinly veiled the white arms and fell away from the rounded throat, Miss Case was just as beautiful to look upon as when she stands in bewildering evening gown before a rapt audience. And, what is much more to the

point, she is a thoroughly sensible, sincere American girl, with no frills and no nonsense about her.

After greetings were over, the singer settled herself among the silken cushions of her divan ready for our talk.

"I believe I always wanted to sing, rather than do anything else in the way of music. I studied the piano a little at first, but that did not exactly appeal to me. I also began the violin, because my father is fond of that instrument and wanted me to play it. But the violin was not just what I wanted either, for all the time I longed to sing. Singing is such a part of one's very self; I wanted to express myself through it. I had no idea, when I started, that I should ever make a specialty of it, or that, in a comparatively few years I should be singing all over the country. I did not know what was before me, I only wanted to learn to sing.

"Now I cannot tell just how I do the different things one must do to sing correctly. I know that, if I have to master some subject, I just sit down and work at that thing till I can do it—till it is done. My teacher knows every organ in the anatomy, and can describe the muscles, bones and ligaments found in the head, face and throat. She can make a dia-

gram of the whole or any part. Not that such knowledge is going to make a singer, but it may help in directing one's efforts."

TONE PLACEMENT

"Can you describe tone placement?" she was asked.

"For the deeper tones—as one makes them —they seem to come from lower down: for the middle and higher tones, you feel the vibrations in facial muscles and about the eyes, always focused forward, just at the base of the forehead, between the eyes. It is something very difficult to put into words; the sensations have to be experienced, when making the tones. The singer must judge so much from sensation, for she cannot very well hear herself. I do not really hear myself; I mean by this I cannot tell the full effect of what I am doing."

WHEN TO PRACTICE

"No doubt you do much practice—or is that now necessary?"

Miss Case considered this thoughtfully.

"I never practice when I am tired, for then it does more harm than good. It is much better for the voice to rest and not use it at all, than to sing when not physically fit. One

must be in good condition to make good tones; they will not be clear and perfect if one is not strong and in good health. I can really study, yet not sing at all. For the whole work is mental anyway.

USING FULL VOICE

"When I work on the interpretation of a song, in the quiet of my music room here, I try to sing it just as I would before an audience; I have not two ways of doing it, one way for a small room and another for a large one. If your tone placement is correct, and you are making the right effects, they will carry equally in a large space. At least this is my experience. But," she added, smiling, "you may find other artists who would not agree to this, who would think quite differently. Each one must see things her own way; and singing is such an individual thing after all.

THE SUBJECT OF INTERPRETATION

"The interpretation of a rôle, or song, is everything—of course. What are mere notes and signs compared to the thoughts expressed through them? Yet it is evident there are people who don't agree to this, for one hears many singers who never seem to look deeper than the printed page. They stand up and go through

their songs, but the audiences remain cold; they are not touched. The audiences are blamed for their apathy or indifference, but how can they be warmed when the singer does not kindle them into life?

"To me there is a wonderful bond of sympathy between the audience and myself. I feel the people, in a sense, belong to me—are part of my family. To them I pour out all my feelings—my whole soul. All the sorrow of the sad songs, all the joy of the gay ones, they share with me. In this spirit I come before them; they feel this, I am sure. It awakens a response at once, and this always inspires me. I put myself in a receptive mood; it has the desired effect; my interpretation becomes inspired through their sympathy and my desire to give out to them.

THE WORDS OF A SONG PARAMOUNT

"I feel the greatest thing about a song is the words. They inspired the music, they were the cause of its being. I cannot imagine, when once words have been joined to music, how other words can be put to the same music, without destroying the whole idea. The words must be made plain to the audience. Every syllable should be intelligible, and understood

by the listener. I feel diction is so absolutely essential. How can a singer expect the audience will take an interest in what she is doing, if they have no idea what it is all about? And this applies not only to English songs but to those in French as well. In an audience there will be many who understand French. Shall the singer imagine she can pronounce a foreign tongue in any old way, and it will go—in these days? No, she must be equally careful about all diction and see that it is as nearly perfect as she can make it; that it is so correct that anybody can understand every word. When she can do this, she has gone a long way toward carrying her audience with her when she sings.

"When the diction is satisfactory, there is yet something much deeper; it is the giving out of one's best thought, one's best self, which must animate the song and carry it home to the listener. It touches the heart, because it comes from one's very inmost being. I am a creature of mood. I cannot sing unless I feel like it. I must be inspired in order to give an interpretation that shall be worth anything.

GROWTH OF APPRECIATION

"In traveling over the country, I have found such wonderful musical growth, and it seems

to increase each year. Even in little places the people show such appreciation for what is good. And I only give them good music—the best songs, both classical and modern. Nothing but the best would interest me. In my recent trip, down in Mexico and Oklahoma, there are everywhere large halls, and people come from all the country round to attend a concert. Men who look as though they had driven a grocery wagon, or like occupation, sit and listen so attentively and with such evident enjoyment. I am sure the circulation of the phonograph records has much to do with America's present wonderful advancement in musical understanding."

Just here a large cat slipped through the doorway; such a beautiful creature, with long gray and white fur and big blue eyes.

"It is a real chinchilla, of high degree," said Miss Case, caressing her pet. "I call her Fochette. I am so fond of all animals, especially dogs and cats."

"You must know the country well, having been over it so much."

"Yes, but oh, the long distances! It often takes so many hours to go from one place to another. I think there is a reason why foreign singers are apt to be rather stout; they are not

worn out by traveling great distances, as cities are so much nearer together than over here!" And Miss Case smiled in amusement. "But, in spite of all discomforts of transportation and so on, the joy of bringing a message to a waiting audience is worth all it costs. I often think, if one could just fly to Chicago or Philadelphia, for instance, sing one's program and return just as quickly, without all these hours of surface travel, how delightful it would be! I had a wonderful experience in an airplane last summer. Flying has the most salutary effect on the voice. After sailing through the air for awhile, you feel as though you could sing anything and everything, the exhilaration is so great. One takes in such a quantity of pure air that the lungs feel perfectly clear and free. One can learn a lesson about breathing from such an experience."

Before parting a final question was asked:

"What, in your opinion, are the vital requisites necessary to become a singer?"

Almost instantly came the reply:

"Brains, Personality, Voice."

With this cryptic answer we took leave of the fair artist.

XIII

FLORENCE EASTON

PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE YOUNG SINGER

English by birth, American by marriage, beloved in every country where her art is known, Florence Easton, after ten years of activity in the music centers of Europe, is now making her home in America. Mme. Easton is a singer whose attitude towards music is one of deepest sincerity. No one could witness her beautiful, sympathetic investiture of the Saint Elizabeth, of Liszt, or some of her other important rôles, without being impressed with this complete, earnest sincerity. It shines out of her earnest eyes and frank smile, as she greets the visitor; it vibrates in the tones of her voice as she speaks. What can even a whole hour's talk reveal of the deep undercurrents of an artist's thought? Yet in sixty minutes many helpful things may be said, and Mme. Easton, always serious in every artistic thing she undertakes, will wish the educational side of our talk to be uppermost.

THE YOUNG SINGER

"I have a deep sympathy for the American girl who honestly wishes to cultivate her voice. Of course, in the first place, she must have a voice to start with; there is no use trying to train something which doesn't exist. Given the voice and a love for music, it is still difficult to tell another how to begin. Each singer who has risen, who has found herself, knows by what path she climbed, but the path she found might not do for another.

"There are quantities of girls in America with good voices, good looks and a love for music. And there are plenty of good vocal teachers, too, not only in New York, but in other large cities of this great country. There is always the problem, however, of securing just the right kind of a teacher. For a teacher may be excellent for one voice but not for another.

THE STUDIO VERSUS THE CONCERT ROOM

"The American girl, trained in the studio, has little idea of what it means to sing in a large hall or opera house. In the small room her voice sounds very pretty, and she can make a number of nice effects; she may also have a

Florence Easton

delicate pianissimo. These things are mostly lost when she tries them in a large space. It is like beginning all over again. She has never been taught any other way but the studio way. If young singers could only have a chance to try their wings frequently in large halls, it would be of the greatest benefit. If they could sing to a public who only paid a nominal sum and did not expect great things; a public who would come for the sake of the music they were to hear, because they wanted the enjoyment and refreshment of it, not for the sake of some singers with big names, they would judge the young aspirant impersonally, which would be one of the best things for her.

VALUE OF HONEST CRITICISM

"Frequently the trouble with the young singer is that her friends too often tell her how wonderful she is. This is a hindrance instead of a help. She should always have some one who will criticize her honestly. The singer cannot really hear herself, that is, not until she is well advanced in her work. Therefore she should always have the guidance of a teacher. I never think of giving a program without going through it for criticism. The office of critic is a very difficult one, especially if you

are to criticize some one you are fond of. Mr. Maclennan and I try to do it for each other. I assure you it is no easy task to sing a program knowing some one is listening who will not spare you, and will tell you all your faults. I know this is all very salutary, but it is human nature to wish to hear one's good points rather than the poor ones. I sometimes say: 'Do tell me the good things I did.' But he says he does not need to speak of those; I only need to know my faults in order that they may be corrected.

"It is so easy to overdo a little, one way or the other. For instance, you make a certain effect,—it goes well. You think you will make it a little more pronounced next time. And so it goes on, until before you know it you have acquired a definite habit, which the critics will call a mannerism and advise you to get rid of. So the artist has to be constantly on the watch, to guard against these incipient faults."

BREATHING EXERCISES

Asked what kind of breathing exercises she used, Mme. Easton continued: "No doubt each one has her own exercises for the practice and teaching of breath control. For myself, I stand at the open window, for one

should always breathe pure air, and I inhale and exhale slowly, a number of times, till I feel my lungs are thoroughly clear and filled with fresh air. Then I frequently sing tones directly after these long inhalations. A one-octave scale, sung slowly in one breath, or at most in two, is an excellent exercise. You remember Lilli Lehmann's talks about the 'long scale'? But the way in which she uses it perhaps no one but a Lehmann could imitate. What a wonderful woman she was—and is! She has such a remarkable physique, and can endure any amount of effort and fatigue. Every singer who hopes to make a success in any branch of the musical profession, should look after the physical side, and see that it is cared for and developed.

"STUDY THE PIANO!"

"If a girl is fond of music, let her first of all study the piano, for a knowledge of the piano and its music is really at the bottom of everything. If I have a word of advice to mothers, it should be: 'Let your child study the piano.' All children should have this opportunity, whether they greatly desire it or not. The child who early begins to study the piano, will often—almost unconsciously—follow the mel-

ody she plays with her voice. Thus the love of song is awakened in her, and a little later it is discovered she has a voice that is worth cultivating. How many of our great singers began their musical studies first at the piano.

"On the other hand, the girl with a voice, who has never worked at the piano, is greatly handicapped from the start, when she begins her vocal studies. As she knows nothing of the piano, everything has to be played for her,—she can never be independent of the accompanist; she loses half the pleasure of knowing and doing things herself."

FULL OR HALF VOICE

Asked if she used full or half voice for practice, Mme. Easton replied:

"I do not, as a rule, use full voice when at work. But this admission, if followed, might prove injurious to the young singer. In the earlier stages of study, one should use full voice, for half voice might result in very faulty tone production. The advanced singer, who has passed the experimental stage can do many things the novice may not attempt, and this is one of them.

IN REGARD TO MEMORIZING

"Here again my particular method of work can hardly be of value to others, as I memorize with great rapidity. It is no effort for me; I seem to be able to visualize the whole part. Music has always been very easy to remember and with sufficient concentration I can soon make the words my own. I always concentrate deeply on what I am doing. Lately I was asked to prepare a leading rôle in one of the season's new operas, to replace a singer at short notice, should this be necessary. I did so and accomplished the task in four days. Mr. Caruso laughingly remarked I must have a camera in my head. I know my own parts, both voice and accompaniment. In learning a song, I commit both voice and words at the same time.

FEELING DEEPLY DURING PERFORMANCE

"I feel the meaning of the music, the tragedy or comedy, the sadness or gayety of it each time I perform it, but not, as a rule, to the extent of being entirely worn out with emotion. It depends, however, on the occasion. If you are singing in a foreign language, which the audience does not understand, you make

every effort to 'put it over,' to make them see what you are trying to tell them. You strive to make the song intelligible in some way. You may add facial expression and gesture, more than you would otherwise do. All this is more wearing because of the effort involved.

LANGUAGE

"This brings us to another point, the study of languages. The Italian sings nearly all his rôles in his own tongue, with a few learned in French. With the Frenchman, it is the same: he sings in his own tongue and learns some parts in Italian. But we poor Americans are forced to learn our parts in all three languages. This, of itself, greatly adds to our difficulties. We complain that the American sings his own language so carelessly. An Italian, singing his own language for his own people, may not be any more careful than we are, but he will make English, if he attempts it, more intelligible than we do, because he takes extra care to do so. The duty is laid upon Americans to study other languages, if they expect to sing. I know how often this study is neglected by the student. It is another phase of that haste to make one's way which is characteristic of the young student and singer.

"Take, for example, the girl in the small town, who is trying to do something with her voice. She believes if she can get to New York, or some other music center, and have six months' lessons with some well known teacher, she will emerge a singer. She comes and finds living expenses so great that only one lesson a week with the professor is possible. There is no chance for language or diction study, or piano lessons; yet all these she ought to have. And one vocal lesson a week is entirely inadequate. The old way of having daily lessons was far more successful. The present way vocal teachers give lessons is not conducive to the best development. The pupils come in a hurry, one after another, to get their fifteen or twenty minutes of instruction. Yet one cannot blame the teacher for he must live.

THE IDEAL WAY

"The ideal way is to have several lessons a week, and not to take them in such haste. If the pupil arrives, and finds, on first essay, that her voice is not in the best of trim, how much better to be able to wait a bit, and try again; it might then be all right. But, as I said, under modern conditions, this course seems not to be possible, for the teacher must live. If

only vocal lessons could be free, at least to the talented ones! It seems sad that a gifted girl must pay to learn to sing, when it is a very part of her, as much as the song of the bird. Ah, if I had plenty of money, I would see that many of them should have this privilege, without always looking at the money end of it.

AMOUNT OF DAILY PRACTICE

"It seems to me the young singer should not practice more than two periods of fifteen or twenty minutes each. At most one should not use the voice more than an hour a day. We hear of people practicing hours and hours daily, but that is probably in books. The voice cannot be treated as the pianist or violinist does his fingers. One must handle the voice with much more care.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE YOUNG SINGER IN AMERICA

"The chances for the American singer to make a career in concert and recital are abundant. In no other country in the world do such opportunities exist. If she can meet the requirements, she can win both fame and fortune on the concert stage.

"In opera, on the other hand, opportunities

are few and the outlook anything but hopeful. Every young singer casts longing eyes at the Metropolitan, or Chicago Opera, as the goal of all ambition. But that is the most hopeless notion of all. No matter how beautiful the voice, it is drill, routine, experience one needs. Without these, plus musical reputation, how is one to succeed in one of the two opera houses of the land? And even if one is accepted 'for small parts,' what hope is there of rising, when some of the greatest artists of the world hold the leading rôles? What the American singer needs is opportunity to gain experience and reputation in smaller places. Several years' drill and routine would fit the aspirant for a much broader field. This would give her command over her resources and herself, and perfect her voice and impersonations, if she has the gifts and constantly studies to improve them. Even England, so small compared to America, has seven opera companies that travel up and down the land, giving opera; they have done this during all the years of the war.

"This question of providing opportunity for operatic experience in America, is one which has long been discussed and many experiments have been tried, without arriving at satisfac-

tory results. What is needed is to awaken interest in opera in small places—just little out-of-the-way towns. My idea would be to have a regular stock local opera company, and have the standard operas studied. Have a little orchestra of about twenty and a small chorus. The small parts to be learned by the most competent singers in the place. Then have the few principal rôles taken by 'guest artists,' who might make these engagements in regular route and succession. It seems to me such a plan could be carried out, and what a joy it would be to any small community! But people must gradually awake to this need: it will take time."

XIV

MARGUERITE D'ALVAREZ

THE MESSAGE OF THE SINGER

A GREAT podium backed with green, reminding one of a forest of palms; dim lights through the vast auditorium; a majestic, black-robed figure standing alone among the palms, pouring out her voice in song; a voice at once vibrant, appealing, powerful, filled now with sweeping passion, again with melting tenderness; such was the stage setting for my first impression of Mme. Marguerite d'Alvarez, and such were some of the emotions she conveyed.

Soon after this experience, I asked if I might have a personal talk with the artist whose singing had made such a deep impression upon me. It was most graciously granted, and at the appointed hour I found myself in a charmingly appointed yet very homelike salon, chatting with this Spanish lady from Peru, who speaks such beautiful English and is courtesy itself.

This time it was not a somber, black-robed figure who came forward so graciously to greet

me, for above a black satin walking skirt, Madame had added a blouse of soft creamy lace, which revealed the rounded curves of neck and arms; the only ornament being a string of pearls about the full throat. Later in our talk I ventured to express my preference for creamy draperies instead of black, for the concert room; but the singer thought otherwise. "No," she said; "my gown must be absolutely unobtrusive—negative. I must not use it to heighten effect, or to attract the audience to me personally. People must be drawn to me by what I express, by my art, by what I have to give them."

But to begin at the beginning. In answer to my first question, "What must one do to become a singer?" Madame said:

"To become a singer, one must have a voice; that is of the first importance. In handling and training that voice, breathing is perhaps the most vital thing to be considered. To some breath control seems to be second nature; others must toil for it. With me it is intuition; it has always been natural. Breathing is such an individual thing. With each person it is different, for no two people breathe in just the same way, whether natural or acquired. Just as one pianist touches the keys of the instru-

Marguerite D'Alvarez

ment in his own peculiar way, unlike the ways of all other pianists. For instance, no two singers will deliver the opening phrase of 'My heart at thy sweet voice,' from *Samson,* in exactly the same way. One will expend a little more breath on some tones than on others; one may sing it softer, another louder. Indeed how can two people ever give out a phrase in the same way, when they each feel it differently? The great thing is to control the management of the breath through intelligent study. But alas,"—with a pretty little deprecating gesture,—"many singers do not seem to use their intelligence in the right way. They need to study so many things besides vocalizes and a few songs. They ought to broaden themselves in every way. They should know books, pictures, sculpture, acting, architecture, —in short everything possible in the line of art, and of life. For all these things will help them to sing more intelligently. They should cultivate all these means of self-expression. For myself, I have had a liberal education in music—piano, harmony, theory, composition and kindred subjects. And then I love and study art in all its forms and manifestations."

"Your first recital in New York was a rich and varied feast," I remarked.

"Indeed I feel I gave the audience too much; there was such a weight of meaning to each song, and so many! I cannot sing indifferent or superficial songs. I must sing those which mean much, either of sadness or mirth, passion or exaltation. No one knows (who has not been through it) what it means to face a great audience of strangers, knowing that something in you must awake those people and draw them toward you: you must bare your very soul to them and bring theirs to you, in answering response, just by your voice. It is a wonderful thing, to bring to masses of people a message in this way. I feel this strongly, whenever I stand before a large audience, that with every note I sing I am delivering something of the God-given gift which has been granted to me—that I can do some good to each one who hears. If they do not care for me, or if they misunderstand my message, they may hate me—at first. When they do understand, then they adore me.

SENTIMENT VERSUS TEMPERAMENT

"You can well believe it is far more difficult to sing a recital program than to do an operatic rôle. In the recital you are absolutely alone, and entirely responsible for your effect on the

audience. You must be able to express every variety of emotion and feeling, must make them realize the difference between sorrow and happiness, revenge or disdain; in short, make them, for the moment, experience these things. The artist who can best vivify these varying emotions must have temperament. On the piano, you may hear players who express sentiment, feeling, fine discrimination in tone color and shading; but comparatively few possess real temperament. There is great difference between that quality and sentiment. The one can be learned, to a certain extent; but temperament is one's very life and soul, and is bound to sweep everything before it. Of this one thing I am very sure; the singer cannot express all these emotions without feeling them to the full during performance. I always feel every phrase I sing—I live it. That is why, after a long and exhausting program, I am perfectly limp and spent. For I have given all that was in me. Friends of Sara Bernhardt say that after a performance, they would find her stretched prone on a couch in her dressing room, scarcely able to move or speak. The strain of a public appearance, when one gives one's heart's blood,

is beyond words"; and Madame's upturned face and expressive gesture denoted how keenly alive she was to this experience.

After a little pause, I said: "Let us come down to earth, while you tell me just how you study. No doubt you do some daily technical practice."

MASSAGE THE VOICE

"Oh, yes, technic is most important; one can do nothing without it. When I begin to study in the morning, I give the voice what I call a massage. One's voice cannot be driven, it must be coaxed, enticed. This massage consists of humming exercises, with closed lips. Humming is the sunshine of the voice." The singer illustrated the idea with a short musical figure, consisting of three consecutive tones of the diatonic scale, ascending and descending several times; on each repetition the phrase began on the next higher note of the scale. "You see," she continued, "this little exercise brings the tone fully forward. As you feel the vibration, it should be directly between the eyes.

"Now, after you have coaxed the voice forward in this way, and then opened your lips to sing a full tone, this tone should, indeed

must, be right in the same place where the humming tones were,—it cannot be anywhere else." Madame illustrated again, first humming on one tone, then letting it out with full resonance, using the vowel Ah, which melted into O, and later changed into U, as the tone died away. "This vibration in the voice should not be confounded with a tremolo, which is, of course, very undesirable. A voice without vibrato, would be cold and dead, expressionless. There must be this pulsing quality in the tone, which carries waves of feeling on it.

"Thus the singer entices the voice to come forward and out, never treating it roughly or harshly, never forcing or straining it. Take pleasure in every tone you make; with patience and pleasure much is accomplished. I could not give you a more useful tip than this."

"Will you tell me how you learn a song?" she was asked.

"I first read over the text and get a good idea of its meaning. When I begin to study the song, I never separate the music from the words, but learn both together. I play the piano of course, and thus can get a good idea of the accompaniment, and of the whole *ensemble.*

"I feel so strongly that real art, the highest

art, is for those who truly understand it and its mission. A dream of mine is one day to found a school of true art. Everything in this school shall be on a high plane of thought. The instructors shall be gifted themselves and have only lofty ideals. And it will be such a happiness to watch the development of talent which may blossom into genius through having the right nurture. I shall watch this work from a distance, for I might be too anxious if I allowed myself to be in the midst of the work. But this is my dream, and I hope it will one day come true."

XV

MARIA BARRIENTOS

BE YOUR OWN CRITIC

It is often remarked that the world has grown far away from coloratura singing; that what we want to-day is the singing actor, the dramatic singer, who can portray passion—tear it to tatters if need be—but at least throw into voice gesture and action all the conflicting emotions which arise when depicting a modern dramatic character. It is said, with much truth, composers do not write coloratura parts in these days, since audiences do not care to listen to singers who stand in the middle of the stage, merely to sing beautiful arias and tonal embroideries. Therefore there are very few coloratura singers at present, since their opportunities are so limited.

To the last objection it can be answered that audiences do still flock to hear a great coloratura artist, for they know they will hear pure, beautiful melodies when they listen to the old Italian operas. And melody proves to be a magnet every time; it always touches the heart.

Again, the coloratura singer is not obliged to stand in the middle of the stage, while she warbles beautiful tones, with seemingly little regard for the rôle she is enacting. The coloratura singer, who is an artist, can act as well as sing. Tetrazzini, as she moves about the room, greeting her guests, as she does in *Traviata* or *Lucia,* can at the same time keep right on with her florid song, proving she can think of both arts at once.

It is quite true there are not many coloratura singers of the first rank to-day. When you have mentioned Galli-Curci, Tetrazzini, Barrientos, and Frieda Hempel—the last is both lyric and coloratura—you have named all the great ones who are known to us here in America. There are a couple of younger artists, Garrison and Macbeth, who are rapidly gaining the experience which will one day place them in the charmed circle.

Consider for an instant the three first named singers. They stand at the very top of their profession; they are each and all great in their chosen line, to which they are fitted by reason of their special vocal gifts. Yet how absolutely different is each from the other! They cannot even be compared. They all sing the great florid arias, but each with her own pe-

Maria Barrientos

culiar timbre of voice, her individual nuance and manner of expression. And it is well this should be so. We would not have all coloratura singing of the same pattern of sameness or quality, for we find uniformity is monotonous. There is one peculiar mode of mastery for Galli-Curci, another for Tetrazzini, still another for Barrientos; each in her particular *genre* is unique, apart.

Perhaps this is especially the case with the Spanish prima donna, Barrientos, who has for several years past come to the Metropolitan for part of the season. She lives very quietly—almost in seclusion—in the great city, keeping very much to herself, with her mother and the members of her household, and does not care to have the simple routine she plans for herself interrupted by any outside demands on her crowded days.

Thus it happens that very few come face to face with the Spanish artist except her personal friends. But once in a while she breaks the strict rule, and will consent to speak with a serious questioner about her manner of study, how she happened to take up a musical career, also some of the characteristics of her country, its people and its musical art.

As her own art of song is most delicate and

pure, as her instrument is the most fragile and ethereal of any of the voices of her class, so the singer herself is of slight and delicate physique. Her oval face, with its large luminous eyes, has a charm more pronounced than when seen on the other side of the footlights. Her manner is simple and sincere, in common with that of all great artists.

"Although I always loved singing, I never expected to become a singer," began Mme. Barrientos, as we were seated on a comfortable divan in her artistic music room. "As a very young girl, hardly more than a child, my health became delicate. I had been working very hard at the Royal Conservatory of Music, in Barcelona, my native city, studying piano, violin and theory, also composition. I was always a delicate child, and the close application required for these studies was too much for me. Singing was prescribed in order to develop my chest and physique; I took it up as a means of health and personal pleasure, without the slightest idea to what it might lead.

"You speak of the responsibility of choosing a good and reliable vocal instructor. This is indeed a difficult task, because each teacher is fully persuaded that his method is the only correct one. But there are so *many teachers,* and

some of them do not even sing themselves at all. Can you imagine a vocal teacher who cannot sing himself, who is so to say voiceless, unable to demonstrate what he teaches? A piano or violin teacher must play his instrument, or he will not be able to show the pupils how it ought to be done. But the vocal teacher thinks to instruct without demonstrating what he is trying to impart.

BEGINNING VOCAL STUDY WITH OPERA

"So I did not begin my studies with a regular vocal teacher, but with a dilettante—I do not know just how you say that in English. This gentleman was not a professional; he was a business man who at the same time was a good musician. Instead of starting me with a lot of scales and exercises, we began at once with the operas. I was twelve years old when I began, and after one year of this kind of study, made my début in the rôle of Inez, in *L'Africaine*. About this time I lost my kind instructor, who passed away. I then worked by myself until I was sixteen, when I began to study technic systematically. As you see, then, I am practically self-taught. It seems to me, if one has voice and intelligence, one can and should be one's own teacher. No one else can do as

much for you as you can do for yourself. You can tell what the sensations are, what parts are relaxed and what parts are firm, better than any one else. You can listen and work on tone quality until it reaches the effect you desire. I do not neglect vocal technic now, for I know its value. I do about three quarters of an hour technical practice every day—scales and exercises.

MEMORIZING

"I memorize very easily; it only takes a few weeks to learn an operatic rôle. I spent three weeks on *Coq d'Or,* and that is a difficult part, so many half tones and accidentals. But I love that music, it is so beautiful; it is one of my favorite rôles. Some parts are longer and more difficult than others. Of course I know most of the Italian operas and many French ones. I should like to sing *Mireille* and *Lakmé* here, but the Director may wish to put on other works instead.

SPANISH OPERA

"Yes, we have native opera in Spain, but the works of our operatic composers are little known in other lands. The Spanish people are clannish, you see, and seem to lack the

ambition to travel abroad to make their art known to others; they are satisfied to make it known to their own people. Casals and I —we are perhaps the ones who regularly visit you, though you have several Spanish singers in the opera who reside here permanently.

"As for Spanish composers of instrumental music, you are here somewhat familiar with the names of Grovelez and Albeniz; Granados you know also, both his opera, *Goyescas,* which was performed at the Metropolitan, and his personality. He came to America to witness the premier of his opera, and while here proved he was a most excellent pianist as well as a composer of high merit, which fact was revealed in his piano and vocal compositions. The American people were most kind and appreciative to him. When the disaster came and he was lost at sea, the testimonial they sent his orphaned children was a goodly sum, though I hardly think the children appreciated your goodness.

"Among the composers in Spain who have turned their gifts toward operatic channels I can mention Pedrell, Morea, Falla, Vives and Breton. Vives is now writing an opera for me, entitled *Abanico.* Gradually, no doubt, the music of our country, especially its opera,

will find its way to other lands. Even in England, I am told, Spanish music is very little known; our many distinguished modern musicians are hardly even names. Of course the world knows our Toreador songs, our castanet dances, and the like; perhaps they think we have little or no serious music, because it is still unknown. Spanish music is peculiar to the country; it is permeated with the national spirit and feeling."

Asked if she would sing in South America during the vacation, the singer answered:

"I have sung there with great success. But I shall not be able to go there this summer. My little boy has been placed in a school in France; it is the first time we have been separated, and it has been very hard for me to have the ocean between us. I shall sing at Atlanta, the first week of May, and then sail the middle of the month for France. Yes, indeed, I hope to return to America next season.

"I trust you have been able to understand my poor English," she said smiling, as she parted with her visitor; "we speak several languages here in my home—Spanish with my mother and friends, French and Italian with others in the household. But there seems little necessity for using English, even though I am

living in the heart of the metropolis. Perhaps next year, I shall master your language better."

And the picture of her, as she stood in her artistic, home-like salon, with its lights, its pictures and flowers, is even more lasting than any to be remembered on the operatic stage.

XVI

CLAUDIA MUZIO

A CHILD OF THE OPERA

In tales of romance one reads sometimes of a gifted girl who lives in a musical atmosphere all her life, imbibing artistic influences as naturally and almost as unconsciously as the air she breathes. At the right moment, she suddenly comes out into the light and blossoms into a full fledged singer, to the surprise and wonder of all her friends. Or she is brought up behind the scenes in some great Opera House of the world, where, all unnoticed by her elders, she lives in a dream world of her own, peopled by the various characters in the operas to which she daily listens. She watches the stage so closely and constantly that she unconsciously commits the rôles of the heroines she most admires, to memory. She knows what they sing, how they act the various parts, how they impersonate the characters. Again, at the right moment, the leading prima donna is indisposed, there is no one to take her place;

Claudia Muzio

manager is in despair, when the slip of a girl, who is known to have a voice, but has never sung in opera, offers to go on in place of the absent one. She is finally permitted to do so; result, a popular success.

Some pages of Claudia Muzio's musical story read like the romantic experiences of a novel-heroine. She, too, was brought up in great opera houses, and it seemed natural, that in due course of time, she should come into her own, in the greatest lyric theater of the land of her adoption.

When she returned to America, a couple of years ago, after gaining experience in Europe, she arrived toward the end of the season preceding her scheduled début here, to prepare herself more fully for the coming appearance awaiting her.

I was asked to meet and talk with the young singer, to ascertain her manner of study, and some of her ideas regarding the work which lay before her.

"It was always my dream to sing at the Metropolitan, and my dream has come true."

Claudia Muzio said the words with her brilliant smile, as her great soft dark eyes gazed luminously at the visitor.

The day was cold and dreary without, but the singer's apartment was of tropical warmth. A great bowl of violets on the piano exhaled delicious fragrance; the young Italian in the bloom of her oriental beauty, seemed like some luxuriant tropical blossom herself.

Claudia Muzio, who was just about to take her place among the personnel of the Metropolitan, is truly to the manner born,—a real child of the opera. She has lived in opera all her life, has imbibed the operatic atmosphere from her earliest remembrance. It must be as necessary for a singer who aspires to fill a high place in this field of artistic endeavor, to live amid congenial surroundings, as for a pianist, violinist or composer to be environed by musical influences.

"Yes, I am an Italian," she began, "for I was born in Italy; but when I was two years old I was taken to London, and my childhood was passed in that great city. My father was stage manager at Covent Garden, and has also held the same post at the Manhattan and Metropolitan Opera Houses in New York. So I have grown up in the theater. I have always listened to opera—daily, and my childish imagination was fired by seeing the art of the great singers. I always hoped I should one

day become a singer, so I always watched the artists in action, noting how they did everything. As a result, I do not now have to study acting as a separate branch of the work, for acting comes to me naturally. I am very temperamental; I feel intuitively how the rôle should be enacted.

"All tiny children learn to sing little songs, and I was no exception. I acquired quite a number, and at the age of six, exhibited my accomplishments at a little recital. But I never had singing lessons until I began to study seriously at about the age of sixteen. Although I did not study the voice till I reached that age, I was always occupied with music, for I learned as a little girl to play both harp and piano.

"We lived in London, of which city I am very fond, from the time I was two, till I was fourteen, then we came to America. After residing here a couple of years, it was decided I should make a career, and we went to Italy. I was taken to Madame Anna Casaloni at Turino. She was quite elderly at that time, but she had been a great singer. When she tried my voice, she told me it was quite properly placed—so I had none of that drudgery to go through.

"At first my voice was a very light soprano, hardly yet a coloratura. It became so a little later, however, and then gradually developed into a dramatic soprano. I am very happy about this fact, for I love to portray tears as well as laughter—sorrow and tragedy as well as lightness and gayety. The coloratura manner of singing is all delicacy and lightness, and one cannot express deep emotion in this way.

"We subsequently went to Milano, where I studied with Madame Viviani, a soprano who had enjoyed great success on the operatic stage.

"After several years of serious study I was ready to begin my career. So I sang in Milan and other Italian cities, then at Covent Garden, and now I am in the Metropolitan. In Italy I created the rôle of Fiora in *Amore dei tre Re,* and sang with Ferrari-Fontana. I also created Francesca in *Francesca da Rimini,* under its composer, Zandonai. I have a repertoire of about thirty operas, and am of course adding to it constantly, as one must know many more than thirty rôles. Since coming to New York, I have learned *Aïda,* which I did not know before, and have already appeared in it. It was learned thoroughly in eight days. Now I am at work on *Madame Butterfly.*

TECHNICAL PRACTICE

"I work regularly every morning on vocal technic. Not necessarily a whole hour at a stretch, as some do; but as much time as I feel I need. I give practically my whole day to study, so that I can make frequent short pauses in technical practice. If technic is studied with complete concentration and vigor, as it always should be, it is much more fatiguing than singing an opera rôle.

"You ask about the special forms of exercises I use. I sing all the scales, one octave each—once slow and once fast—all in one breath. Then I sing triplets on each tone, as many as I can in one breath. I can sing about fifteen now, but I shall doubtless increase the number. For all these I use full power of tone. Another form of exercise is to take one tone softly, then go to the octave above, which tone is also sung softly, but there is a large crescendo made between the two soft tones. My compass is three octaves—from C below middle C, to two octaves above that point. I also have C sharp, but I do not practice it, for I know I can reach it if I need it, and I save my voice. Neither do I work on the final tones of the lowest octave, for the same reason—to preserve the voice.

BREATH CONTROL

"Every singer knows how important is the management of the breath. I always hold the chest up, taking as long breaths as I can conveniently do. The power to hold the breath, and sing more and more tones with one breath, grows with careful, intelligent practice. There are no rules about the number of phrases you can sing with a single breath. A teacher will tell you; if you can sing two phrases with one breath, do so; if not, take breath between. It all rests with the singer.

MEMORIZING

"I learn words and music of a rôle at the same time, for one helps the other. When I have mastered a rôle, I know it absolutely, words, music and accompaniment. I can always play my accompaniments, for I understand the piano. I am always at work on repertoire, even at night. I don't seem to need very much sleep, I think, and I often memorize during the night; that is such a good time to work, for all is so quiet and still. I lie awake thinking of the music, and in this way I learn it. Or, perhaps it learns itself. For when I retire the music is not yet mastered, not yet

my own, but when morning comes I really know it.

"Of course I must know the words with great exactness, especially in songs. I shall do English songs in my coming song recital work, and the words and diction must be perfect, or people will criticize my English. I always write out the words of my rôles, so as to be sure I understand them and have them correctly memorized.

KEEPING UP REPERTOIRE

"Most singers, I believe, need a couple of days—sometimes longer—in which to review a rôle. I never use the notes or score when going over a part in which I have appeared, for I know them absolutely, so there is no occasion to use the notes. Other singers appear frequently at rehearsal with their books, but I never take mine. My intimate knowledge of score, when I assisted my father in taking charge of operatic scores, is always a great help to me. I used to take charge of all the scores for him, and knew all the cuts, changes and just how they were to be used. The singers themselves often came to me for stage directions about their parts, knowing I had this experience.

"Yes, as you suggest, I could sing here in winter, then in South America in summer." (Miss Muzio accomplished this recently, with distinguished success and had many thrilling adventures incident to travel.) "This would mean I would have no summer at all, for that season with them is colder than we have it here. No, I want my summer for rest and study. During the season at the Metropolitan I give up everything for my art. I refuse all society and the many invitations I receive to be guest of honor here and there. I remain quietly at home, steadfastly at work. My art means everything to me, and I must keep myself in the best condition possible, to be ready when the call comes to sing. One cannot do both, you know; art and society do not mix well. I have never disappointed an audience; it would be a great calamity to be obliged to do so."

XVII

EDWARD JOHNSON (EDOUARDO DI GIOVANNI)

THE EVOLUTON OF AN OPERA STAR

The story of Edward Johnson's musical development should prove an incentive, nay more, a beacon light along the path of consistent progress toward the goal of vocal and operatic achievement. Indeed as a tiny child he must have had the desire to become a singer. A friend speaks of musical proclivities which began to show themselves at an early age, and describes visits of the child to their home, where, in a little Lord Fauntleroy suit, he would stand up before them all and sing a whole recital of little songs, to the delight of all his relatives. The singer's progress, from the musical child on and up to that of an operatic artist, has been rational and healthy, with nothing hectic or overwrought about it; a constant, gradual ascent of the mountain. And while an enviable vantage ground has been reached, such an artist must feel there are yet other heights to conquer. For even excellence,

already achieved, requires constant effort to be held at high water mark. And the desire for greater perfection, which every true artist must feel, is a never-ending urge to continued struggle.

In a recent conversation with the tenor, Mr. Johnson spoke of early days, when he desired above everything else to become a musician and follow a musical career, though his family expected him to enter the business world. He came to New York to look the ground over, hoping there might be opportunity to continue his studies and make his way at the same time. He was fortunate enough to secure a church position, and sang subsequently in some of the best New York and Brooklyn churches. After this period he did much concert work, touring through the Middle West with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and singing in many Music Festivals throughout the country.

But church and concert singing did not entirely satisfy; he longed to try his hand at opera,—in short to make an operatic career. He was well aware that he would not find this field nor gain the necessary experience in America; he must go to Italy, the land of song, to gain the required training and ex-

Edward Johnson

perience. He was also fully aware of the fact that there was plenty of hard work, and probably many disappointments before him, but he did not shrink from either.

"Fortunately, I have a fund of humor," he said, and there was a twinkle in his eye as he spoke. "It is a saving grace, as you say; without it I believe I should have many times given up in sheer despair."

Mr. Johnson went to Italy in 1909, beginning at once his studies with Lombardi, in Florence. In the ten years of his absence from his home land he has built up a reputation and made a career in the great operatic centers of Italy, Spain and South America. After his début in Padua, he became leading tenor at La Scala, Milan, for five consecutive seasons. In Rome he spent four seasons at the Costanzi Theater, in the meantime making two visits to the Colon Theater, Buenos Aires, and filling engagements in Madrid, Bologna, Florence and Genoa.

"How could I stay away from America for such a length of time? you ask. For various reasons. I was getting what I had come to Italy for, experience and reputation. I was comfortable and happy in my work. I loved the beautiful country, and the life suited me.

The people were kind. I had my own home in Florence, which is still there and to which I can return when my season is over here. Best of all I had the opportunity of creating all the new tenor rôles in the recent operas of Puccini, Montemezzi, Pizzetti and Gratico. I also created the rôle of *Parsifal* in Italian, and the first season at La Scala, it was performed twenty-seven times."

"With your permission let us go a little into detail in regard to the needs of the young singer and his method of study, so that he may acquire vocal mastery. What do you consider the most important and necessary subject for the young singer, or any one who wishes to enter the profession, to consider?"

"A musical education," was the prompt, unhesitating reply. "So many think if they have a good natural voice and take singing lessons, that is quite sufficient; they will soon become singers. But a singer should also be a musician. He should learn the piano by all means and have some knowledge of theory and harmony. These subjects will be of the greatest benefit in developing his musicianship; indeed he cannot well get on without them. A beautiful voice with little musical education, is not of as much value to its possessor as one not so

beautiful, which has been well trained and is coupled with solid musical attainments.

A MUSICAL CAREER

"If one goes in for a musical career, one should realize at the start, something of what it means, what is involved, and what must go with it. Singing itself is only a part, perhaps even the smaller part, of one's equipment. If opera be the goal, there are languages, acting, make up, impersonation, interpretation, how to walk, how to carry oneself, all to be added to the piano and harmony we have already spoken of. The art of the singer is a profession—yes, and a business too. You prepare yourself to fill a public demand; you must prove yourself worthy, you must come up to the standard, or there will not be a demand for what you have to offer. And it is right this should be so. We should be willing to look the situation fairly in the eye, divesting it of all those rose colored dreams and fancies; then we should get right down to work.

NOT MANY RULES

"If you get right down to the bottom, there are in reality not so many singing rules to learn. You sing on the five vowels, and when

you can do them loudly, softly, and with mezzo voce, you have a foundation upon which to build vocal mastery. And yet some people study eight, ten years without really laying the foundation. Why should it take the singer such a long time to master the material of his equipment? A lawyer or doctor, after leaving college, devotes three or four years only to preparing himself for his profession, receives his diploma, then sets up in business. It ought not to be so much more difficult to learn to sing than to learn these other professions.

THE EAR

"Of course the ear is the most important factor, our greatest ally. It helps us imitate. Imitation forms a large part of our study. We hear a beautiful tone; we try to imitate it; we try in various ways, with various placements, until we succeed in producing the sound we have been seeking. Then we endeavor to remember the sensations experienced in order that we may repeat the tone at will. So you see Listening, Imitation and Memory are very important factors in the student's development.

BEL CANTO

"I have just spoken of a beautiful tone. The old Italian operas cultivate the *bel canto*, that is—beautiful singing. Of course it is well for the singer to cultivate this first of all, for it is excellent, and necessary for the voice. But modern Italian opera portrays the real men and women of to-day, who live, enjoy, suffer, are angry and repentant. *Bel canto* will not express these emotions. When a man is jealous or in a rage, he will not stand quietly in the middle of the stage and sing beautiful tones. He does not think of beautiful tones at all. Hatred and jealousy should be expressed in the voice as well as in action and gesture; they are far from lovely in themselves, and to be natural and true to life, they will not make lovely tones in the voice. We want singing actors to-day, men and women who can adequately portray the characters they impersonate through both voice and action.

LEARNING A RÔLE

"In taking up a new part I vocalize the theme first, to get an idea of the music; then I learn the words. After this I work with the accompanist who comes to me every morning. Of course, besides this, I do daily vocalizes

and vocal exercises; one must always keep up one's vocal technic.

"But learning words and music is only a part of the work to be done on a rôle. It must then be interpreted; more than this it must be visualized. This part of the work rests largely with the singer, and gives opportunity for his individuality to assert itself. Of course the general idea of the characterization is given us, the make-up, posturing and so on. To work out these ideas, to make the part our own, to feel at home in it, so that it shall not seem like acting, but appear perfectly natural—all this takes a great deal of thought, time and study. It is all a mental process, as every one knows; we must project our thought out to the audience, we must 'get it over,' or it will never strike fire!"

INTERPRETATION

On the subject of individuality in interpretation, Mr. Johnson was convincing. "I feel that if I have worked out a characterization, I must stick to my idea, in spite of what others say. It is my own conception, and I must either stand or fall by it. At times I have tried to follow the suggestions of this or that

critic and have changed my interpretation to suit their taste. But it always rendered me self conscious, made my work unnatural and caused me speedily to return to my own conception.

LEARNING BY DOING

"The singer finds the stage a great teacher. Before the footlights he has constant opportunity to try out this or that effect, to note which placement of the voice best fits the tones he wishes to produce. Then, too, he soon learns to feel whether he has made the impression he had hoped, whether he has the audience with him. If he cannot win the audience, he takes careful thought to see why. In order to win his hearers, to get his work across the footlights, there are certain things he must have, virtues he must possess. For instance," —and the artist counted them off on his finger tips,—"he must have Accent, Diction, Characterization, and above all, Sincerity. No matter what other good qualities he may possess, he must be sincere before anything else. If he lack this the audience soon finds it out. There's nothing that wins its way like the grace of sincerity. You see I give prominent place to accent and diction. Whatever

fault the critics found with me, they have always conceded to me both these virtues.

"But time passes and soon the work of the night will begin. I trust that our informal conference may contain a few points of personal experience which may be helpful to those who are striving to enter the field of opera." And with his pleasant smile and genial greeting, Mr. Johnson closed the conference.

XVIII

REINALD WERRENRATH

ACHIEVING SUCCESS ON THE CONCERT STAGE

At the close of a recital by Reinald Werrenrath, the listener feels he has something to carry away, a tangible impression, a real message. What is the impression—can it be defined? Perhaps it is more the complete effect as a whole that makes the deepest impression. The voice is always agreeable, the diction so clear and distinct that every syllable can be followed from the topmost corner of Carnegie Hall, so there is no need to print a program book for this singer. Different qualities of voice render the picture or mood more vivid, and all is accomplished with perfect ease, in itself a charm. People settle in their seats as if certain that a song recital by Werrenrath is sure to bring enjoyment and satisfaction.

And Mr. Werrenrath has proven, through season after season of concert giving in America, that he is filling his own special niche in the scheme of the country's musical life; that

he has his own message of the beautiful—the natural—in vocal art to deliver to the people all over the land, and he is accomplishing this with ever increasing ability and success.

To go through a season filled with concert tours, such as a popular singer has laid out for him, means so many weeks and months of strenuous toil and travel. There may be a few brief hours or days here and there, when he can be at home among family and friends; but soon he is off again—"on the road."

Mr. Werrenrath is the sort of singer who is generally on the wing, or if not exactly that, is so rushed with work, record making and rehearsing for occasional opera appearances, that it is very difficult to get a word with him. I was exceedingly fortunate however, one day recently, to catch a glimpse of him between a Metropolitan rehearsal on the one hand, and some concert business on the other. He entered the room where I waited, tall, vigorous, his fine face lighted by a rapid walk in the fresh air; he seemed the embodiment of mental vigor and alertness.

VOCAL CONTROL

I plunged at once into the subject I had come for, telling him I wanted to know how he

Reinald Werrenrath

had worked to bring about such results as were noted in his recent recital in Carnegie Hall; in what way he had studied, and what, in his opinion, were the most important factors, from an educational point of view, for the young singer to consider.

"That is entirely too difficult a question to be answered briefly, even in a half hour, or in an hour's talk. There are too many angles;" his clear gray eyes looked at me frankly as he spoke. "Voice culture, voice mastery, what is it? It is having control of your instrument to such an extent that you put it out of your thought completely when you sing. The voice is your servant and must do your bidding. This control is arrived at through a variety of means, and can be considered from a thousand angles, any one of which would be interesting to follow up. I have been on the concert stage for nearly a score of years, and ought to know whereof I speak; yet I can say I have not learned it all even now, not by any means. Vocal technic is something on which you are always working, something which is never completed, something which is constantly improving with your mental growth and experience—if you are working along the right lines. People talk of finishing their vo-

cal technic; how can that ever be done? You are always learning how to do better. If you don't make the effect you expected to, in a certain place, when singing in public, you take thought of it afterward, consider what was the matter, *why* you couldn't put it over—why it had no effect on the audience. Then you work on it, learn how to correct and improve it.

EARLY EXPERIENCES

"As you may know, my father was a great singer; he was my first teacher. After I lost him I studied for several years with Dr. Carl Duft and later with Arthur Mees. In all this time I had learned a great deal about music from the intellectual and emotional sides, music in the abstract and so on. In fact, I thought I knew about all there was to be learned about the art of song; I settled back on my oars and let the matter go at that. At last, however, I awoke to see that I didn't know it all yet; I discovered I couldn't put the feeling and emotion which surged within me across to others in the way I wanted to—in the way which could move and impress them; I could not make the effects I wanted; I was getting into a rut. This was seven years ago. At that time I went to Percy Rector Stevens, who has done

me an immense amount of good, and with whom I constantly keep in touch, in case there should be anything wrong with my instrument anywhere. Mr. Stevens understands the mechanics of the voice perhaps better than any one I know of. If I go to him and say: 'I made some tones last night that didn't sound right to me,' or 'I couldn't seem to put over this or that effect; I want you to tell me what is the matter.' He will say: 'Sing for me, show me the trouble and we'll see what we can do for it.' So I sing and he will say: 'You are tightening your throat at that place,' or 'your diaphragm is not working properly,' or there is some other defect. He can always put his finger directly on the weak spot. He is my vocal doctor. Your whole vocal apparatus must work together in entire harmony. We hear of teachers who seem to specialize on some one part of the anatomy to the exclusion of other parts. They are so particular about the diaphragm, for instance; that must be held with exactly the right firmness to support the tone. That is all very well; but what about the chest, the larynx, the throat, the head and all the rest of the anatomy? The truth is the whole trunk and head of the body are concerned in the act of tone production; they form the com-

plete instrument, so to say. When the singer is well and strong and in good condition, all the parts respond and do their work easily and efficiently.

DAILY PRACTICE

"I do not go through a routine of scales and exercises daily—at least not in the season, for I have no time. If you are going to take your automobile out for a spin you don't ride it around for half an hour in the yard to see whether it will go. No, you first look after the machinery, to see if all is in working order, and then you start out, knowing it will go. I do a lot of gymnastics each day, to exercise the voice and limber up the anatomy. These act as a massage for the voice; they are in the nature of humming, mingled with grunts, calls, exclamations, shouts, and many kinds of sounds—indeed so many and various they cannot be enumerated. But they put the voice in condition, so there is no need for all these other exercises which most singers find so essential to their vocal well-being. I will say right here that I am working with two masters; the first for the mechanics of the voice, the second who helps me from quite an opposite angle —interpretation and finish.

WITH MAUREL

"The master from whom I have learned so much that it cannot be estimated is Victor Maurel. He is a most remarkable man, a great thinker and philosopher. If he had turned his attention to any other art or science, or if he had been but a day laborer, he would be a great man anywhere, in any capacity.

"I have been with him, whenever possible, for two years now. He has shown me the philosophy, the psychology of singing. He has taught me the science of intense diction. By means of such diction, I can sing *mezza voce,* and put it over with less effort and much more artistic effect than I ever used to do, when I employed much more voice. You hear it said this or that person has a big voice and can sing with great power. A brass band can make a lot of noise. I have stood beside men, who in a smaller space, could make much more noise than I could. But when they got out on the stage you couldn't hear them at the back of the hall. It is the knowing how to use the voice with the least possible effort, coupled with the right kind of diction, that will make the greatest effect. Now I can express myself, and deliver the message I feel I have to give.

THE SINGER BEFORE AN AUDIENCE

"You ask if I hear myself, when I am singing for an audience. In a general way, yes. Of course I do not get the full effect of what I am doing; a singer never does. It takes the records to tell me that, and I have been making records for a good number of years. But I know the sensations which accompany correct tone production, and if I feel they are different in any place or passage, I try to make a mental note of the fact and the passage, that I may correct it afterwards. But I must emphasize the point that when I sing, I cast away all thought of *how* I do anything technical; I want to get away from the mechanics of the voice; I must keep my thought clear for the interpretation, for the message I have brought to the audience. To be constantly thinking—how am I doing this or that—would hamper me terribly. I should never get anywhere. I must have my vocal apparatus under such control that it goes of itself. A pianist does not think of technic when playing in public, neither should a singer think of his vocal technic. Of course there may be occasions when adverse circumstances thrust conditions upon me. If I have a slight cold, or

tightness of throat, I have to bring all my resources to bear, to rise above the seeming handicap, and sing as well as I can in spite of it. I can say gratefully, without any desire to boast, that during the past eleven years, I have never once missed an engagement or disappointed an audience. Of course I have had to keep engagements when I did not feel in the mood, either physically or mentally. Many singers would have refused under like conditions. But it does not seem fair to the audience to disappoint, or to the manager either; it puts him in a very difficult and unpleasant position. It seems to me the artist should be more considerate of both manager and audience, than to yield to a slight indisposition and so break his engagement.

THE SINGER IN HIS STUDIO

"It makes such a difference—in quality of tone and in effect—whether you sing in a small or large space. Things you do in the studio and which may sound well there, are quite different or are lost altogether in a large hall. You really cannot tell what the effect will be in a great space, by what you do in your studio. In rehearsing and study, I use half voice, and only occasionally do I use full voice, that is

when I wish to get a better idea of the effect."

VOCAL MASTERY

As we stood at the close of the conference, I asked the supreme question—What do you understand by Vocal Mastery? The artist looked as though I were making an impossible demand in requiring an answer to so comprehensive a subject. He took a few strides and then came back.

"I can answer that question with one word —Disregard. Which means, that if you have such control of your anatomy, such command of your vocal resources that they will always do their work, that they can be depended upon to act perfectly, then you can disregard mechanism, and think only of the interpretation—only of your vocal message. Then you have conquered the material—then you have attained Vocal Mastery!"

XIX

SOPHIE BRASLAU

MAKING A CAREER IN AMERICA

A FACT, often overlooked when considering the career of some of our great singers of today, is the fact that they started out to become an instrumentalist rather than a singer. In other words they become proficient on some instrument before taking up serious study of the voice. In this connection one thinks of Mme. Sembrich, who was both pianist and violinist before becoming known as a singer. It would be interesting to follow up this idea and enumerate the vocalists who have broadened their musicianship through the study of other instruments than their own voices. But this delightful task must be reserved for future leisure. For the present it can be set down here that Miss Sophie Braslau, probably the youngest star in the constellation of the Metropolitan artists, is an accomplished pianist, and intended to make her career with the aid of that instrument instead of with her voice.

But we will let the young artist speak for herself. On the occasion in question, she had just returned from a walk, her arms full of rosebuds. "I never can resist flowers," she remarked, as she had them placed in a big silver vase. Then she carried the visitor off to her own special rooms, whose windows overlooked an inner garden, where one forgot one was in the heart of New York. "Indeed it is not like New York at all, rather like Paris," said Miss Braslau, answering my thought.

On a *chaise longue* in this ivory and rose sanctum, reposed a big, beautiful doll, preserved from childish days. The singer took it up; "I don't play with it now," she said with a smile, "but I used to." She placed it carefully in a chair, then settled herself to talk.

"Yes, I intended to make the piano my instrument and began my studies at the age of six. Before long it was seen that I had something of a voice, but no one gave it much thought, supposing I was to be a pianist; indeed I have the hand of one," holding it up. "I don't think, in those early years, I was so very anxious to become a player. I did not love scales—do not now, and would quite as soon have sat at the piano with a book in my lap, while my fingers mechanically did their

Sophie Braslau

stunts. But my mother looked after my practice, and often sat near me. She required a regular amount of time given to music study each day. I am so grateful that she was strict with me, for my knowledge of piano and its literature is the greatest joy to me now. To my thinking all children should have piano lessons; the cost is trifling compared to the benefits they receive. They should be made to study, whether they wish to or not. They are not prepared to judge what is good for them, and if they are given this advantage they will be glad of it later on.

"In due time I entered the Institute of Musical Art, taking the full piano course. Arthur Hochmann was my teacher for piano, and I found him an excellent master. He did a great deal for me; in interpretation, in fineness of detail, in artistic finish I owe him very much. Later I studied several years with Alexander Lambert.

"While at work with my piano, it grew more apparent that I had a voice that should be cultivated. So I began. Afterwards I worked three years with Signor Buzzi Peccia, who started me on an operatic career and finally brought me to the Metropolitan.

"It was a great ordeal for a young singer,

almost a beginner, to start at our greatest Opera House! It meant unremitting labor for me. I worked very hard, but I am not afraid of work. Toscanini held sway when I began, and he was a marvelous musician and conductor. Such exactness, such perfection of detail; he required perfection of every one. He did not at first realize how much of a beginner I was, though I had really learned a large number of rôles. He was so strict in every detail that I wept many bitter tears for fear I would not come up to the mark. I knew the music, but had not gained experience through routine. It seems to me every singer should gain this experience in some smaller places before attempting the highest. My advice would be to go and get experience in Europe first. I have never been in Germany, but in Italy and France there are many small opera houses where one may learn routine.

"Another thing. There is a mistaken notion that one cannot reach any height in opera without 'pull' and great influence. I am sure this is not true; for while a pull may help, one must be able to deliver the goods. If one cannot, all the backing in the world will not make one a success. The singer must have the abil-

ity to 'put it over.' Think of the artists who can do it—Farrar, Gluck, Schumann-Heink. There is never any doubt about them; they always win their audiences. What I have done has been accomplished by hard work, without backing of any kind. Really of what use is backing anyway? The public can judge—or at least it can *feel.* I know very well that when my chance came to sing *Shanewis,* if I had not been able to do it, no amount of influence would have helped the situation. I had it in my own hand to make or mar my career. I often wonder whether audiences really know anything about what you are trying to do; whether they have any conception of what is right in singing, or whether they are merely swayed by the temperament of the singer.

"Whether we are, or are not to be a musical nation should be a question of deep interest to all music lovers. If we really become a great musical people, it will be largely due to the work of the records. We certainly have wonderful advantages here, and are doing a tremendous lot for music.

"I had an interesting experience recently. It was in a little town in North Carolina, where a song recital had never before been

given. Can you fancy a place where there had never even been a concert? The people in this little town were busy producing tobacco and had never turned their thought toward music. In the face of the coming concert what did those people do? They got a program, studied what pieces I had sung on the Victor, got the music of the others; so they had a pretty good idea of what I was going to sing. When I stepped on the platform that night and saw the little upright piano (no other instrument could be secured) and looked into those eager faces, I wondered how they would receive my work. My first number was an aria from *Orfeo.* When I finished, the demonstration was so deafening I had to wait minutes before I could go on. And so it continued all the evening.

"How do I work? Very hard, at least six hours a day. Of these I actually sing perhaps three hours. I begin at nine and give the first hour to memory work on repertoire. I give very thorough study to my programs; for I must know every note in them, both for voice and piano. I make it a point to know the accompaniments, for in case I am ever left without an accompanist, I can play for myself, and it has a great effect on audiences. They may not know or care whether you can

play Beethoven or Chopin, but the fact that you can play while you sing, greatly impresses them.

"In committing a song, I play it over and sing it sufficiently to get a good idea of its construction and meaning; then I work in detail, learning words and music at the same time, usually. Certain things are very difficult for me, things requiring absolute evenness of passage work, or sustained calm. Naturally I have an excess of temperament; I feel things in a vivid, passionate way. So I need to go very slowly at times. To-day I gave several hours to only three lines of an aria by Haendel, and am not yet satisfied with it. Indeed, can we ever rest satisfied, when there is so much to learn, and we can always improve?

"The second hour of my day is given to vocalizes. Of course there are certain standard things that one must do; but there are others that need not be done every day. I try to vary the work as much as I can.

"The rest of the day is given to study on repertoire and all the things that belong to it. There is so much more to a singer's art than merely to sing. And it is a sad thing to find that so many singers lack musicianship. They seem to think if they can sing some songs, or

even a few operas, that is all there is to it. But one who would become an artist must work most of the time. I am sure Charles Hackett knows the value of work; so does Mabel Garrison and many other Americans. And when you think of it, there are really a brave number of our own singers who are not only making good, but making big names for themselves and winning the success that comes from a union of talent and industry."

XX

MORGAN KINGSTON

THE SPIRITUAL SIDE OF THE SINGER'S ART

"A MAN who has risen to his present eminence through determined effort and hard work, who has done it all in America, is a unique figure in the world of art. He can surely give much valuable information to students, for he has been through so much himself." Thus I was informed by one who was in a position to understand how Morgan Kingston had achieved success. The well known tenor was most kind in granting an audience to one seeking light on his ideas and experiences. He welcomed the visitor with simple, sincere courtesy, and discussed for an hour and a half various aspects of the singer's art.

"In what way may I be of service to you?" began Mr. Kingston, after the first greetings had been exchanged.

"There are many questions to ask," was the answer; "perhaps it were best to propound the most difficult one first, instead of reserving it

till the last. What, in your opinion, goes into the acquiring of Vocal Mastery?"

"That is certainly a difficult subject to take up, for vocal mastery includes so many things. First and foremost it includes vocal technic. One must have an excellent technic before one can hope to sing even moderately well. The singer can do nothing without technic, though of course there are many people who try to sing without it. They, however, never get anywhere when hampered by such a lack of equipment. Technic furnishes the tools with which the singer creates his vocal art work; just as the painter's brushes enable him to paint his picture.

RULES OF TECHNIC

"I said the singer should have a finished technic in order to express the musical idea aright, in order to be an artist. But technic is never finished; it goes on developing and broadening as we ourselves grow and develop. We learn by degrees what to add on and what to take away, in our effort to perfect technic. Students, especially in America, are too apt to depend on rules merely. They think if they absolutely follow the rules, they must necessarily become singers; if they find that you

Morgan Kingston

deviate from rule they tell you of it, and hold you up to the letter of the law, rather than its meaning and spirit. I answer, rules should be guides, not tyrants. Rules are necessary in the beginning; later we get beyond them,—or rather we work out their spirit and are not hide-bound by the letter.

EARLY STRUGGLES

"As you may know, I was born in Nottinghamshire, England. I always sang, as a small boy, just for the love of it, never dreaming I would one day make it my profession. In those early days I sang in the little church where Lord Byron is buried. How many times I have walked over the slab which lies above his vault. When I was old enough I went to work in the mines, so you see I know what hardships the miners endure; I know what it means to be shut away from the sun for so many hours every day. And I would lighten their hardships in every way possible. I am sure, if it rested with me, to choose between having no coal unless I mined it myself, I would never dig a single particle. But this is aside from the subject in hand.

"I always sang for the love of singing, and I had the hope that some day I could do some

good with the gift which the good God had bestowed on me. Then, one day, the opportunity came for me to sing in a concert in London. Up to that time I had never had a vocal lesson in my life; my singing was purely a natural product. On this occasion I sang, evidently with some little success, for it was decided that very night that I should become a singer. Means were provided for both lessons and living, and I now gave my whole time and attention toward fitting myself for my new calling. The lady who played my accompaniments at that concert became my teacher. And I can say, with gratitude to a kind Providence, that I have never had, nor wished to have any other. When I hear young singers in America saying they have been to Mr. S. to get his points, then they will go to Mr. W. to learn his point of view, I realize afresh that my experience has been quite different and indeed unique; I am devoutly thankful it has been so.

WHAT THE TEACHER SHOULD DO FOR THE STUDENT

"My teacher made a study of me, of my characteristics, mentality and temperament. That should be the business of every real

teacher, since each individual has different characteristics from every other.

"It is now ten years since I began to study the art of singing. I came to America soon after the eventful night which changed my whole career; my teacher also came to this country. I had everything to learn; I could not even speak my own language; my speech was a dialect heard in that part of the country where I was brought up. I have had to cultivate and refine myself. I had to study other languages, Italian, French and German. I learned them all in America. So you see there is no need for an American to go out of his own country for vocal instruction or languages; all can be learned right here at home. I am a living proof of this. What I have done others can do.

THE TECHNICAL SIDE

"As for technical material, I have never used a great quantity. Of course I do scales and vocalizes for a short time each day; such things are always kept up. Then I make daily use of about a dozen exercises by Rubini. Beyond these I make technical studies out of the pieces. But, after one has made a certain amount of progress on the technical side, one

must work for one's self—I mean one must work on one's moral nature.

THE MORAL SIDE

"I believe strongly that a singer cannot adequately express the beautiful and pure in music while cherishing at the same time, a bad heart and a mean nature behind it. Singing is such a personal thing, that one's mentality, one's inner nature, is bound to reveal itself. Each one of us has evil tendencies to grapple with, envy, jealousy, hatred, sensuality and all the rest of the evils we are apt to harbor. If we make no effort to control these natural tendencies, they will permanently injure us, as well as impair the voice, and vitiate the good we might do. I say it in all humility, but I am earnestly trying to conquer the errors in myself, so that I may be able to do some good with my voice. I have discovered people go to hear music when they want to be soothed and uplifted. If they desire to be amused and enjoy a good laugh, they go to light opera or vaudeville; if they want a soothing, quieting mental refreshment, they attend a concert, opera or oratorio. Therefore I want to give them, when I sing, what they are in need of, what they are longing for. I want to have such control of my-

self that I shall be fitted to help and benefit every person in the audience who listens to me. Until I have thus prepared myself, I am not doing my whole duty to myself, to my art or to my neighbor.

"We hear about the petty envy and jealousy in the profession, and it is true they seem to be very real at times. Picture two young women singing at a concert; one receives much attention and beautiful flowers, the other—none of these things. No doubt it is human nature, so-called, for the neglected one to feel horribly jealous of the favored one. Now this feeling ought to be conquered, for I believe, if it is not, it will prevent the singer making beautiful, correct tones, or from voicing the beauty and exaltation of the music. We know that evil thoughts react on the body and result in diseases, which prevent the singer from reaching a high point of excellence. We must think right thoughts for these are the worth while things of life. Singing teachers utterly fail to take the moral or metaphysical side into consideration in their teaching. They should do this and doubtless would, did they but realize what a large place right thinking occupies in the development of the singer.

"One could name various artists who only

consider their own self-aggrandizement; one is compelled to realize that, with such low aims, the artist is bound to fall short of highest achievement. It is our right attitude towards the best in life and the future, that is of real value to us. How often people greet you with the words: 'Well, how is the world treating you to-day?' Does any one ever say to you —'How are you treating the world to-day?' That is the real thing to consider.

"As I said a few moments ago, I have studied ten years on vocal technic and repertoire. I have not ventured to say so before, but I say it to-night—I can sing! Of course most of the operatic tenor rôles are in my repertoire. This season I am engaged for fourteen rôles at the Metropolitan. These must be ready to sing on demand, that is at a moment's notice,—or say two hours' notice. That means some memory work as well as constant practice.

"Would I rather appear in opera, recital or oratorio? I like them all. A recital program must contain at least a dozen songs, which makes it as long as a leading operatic rôle.

"The ten years just passed, filled as they have been with close study and public work, I consider in the light of preparation. The

following ten years I hope to devote to becoming more widely known in various countries. And then—" a pleasant smile flitted over the fine, clean-cut features,—"then another ten years to make my fortune. But I hasten to assure you the monetary side is quite secondary to the great desire I have to do some good with the talent which has been given me. I realize more and more each day, that to develop the spiritual nature will mean happiness and success in this and in a future existence, and this is worth all the effort and striving it costs."

XXI

FRIEDA HEMPEL

A LESSON WITH A PRIMA DONNA

THERE is no need to say that Frieda Hempel is one of the most admired artists on the opera and concert stage to-day. Every one knows the fact. Miss Hempel has endeared herself to all through her lovely voice, her use of it, her charm of manner and the sincerity of her art.

It is seven years since Miss Hempel first came to sing at the Metropolitan. America has advanced very greatly in musical appreciation during this period. Miss Hempel herself has grown in artistic stature with each new character she has assumed. This season she has exchanged the opera field for that of the concert room, to the regret of opera patrons and all music lovers, who desired to see her at the Metropolitan. Being so constantly on the wing, it has been extremely difficult to secure a word with the admired artist. Late one afternoon, however, toward the end of her very successful concert season, she was able to de-

Photo by Alfred Cheney Johnston

FRIEDA HEMPEL

vote an hour to a conference with the writer on the principles of vocal art.

How fair, slender and girlish she looked, ensconced among the cushions of a comfortable divan in her music room, with a favorite pet dog nestling at her side.

"And you ask how to master the voice; it seems then, I am to give a vocal lesson," she began, with an arch smile, as she caressed the little creature beside her.

BREATHING

"The very first thing for the singer to consider is breath control; always the breathing —the breathing. She thinks of it morning, noon and night. Even before rising in the morning, she has it on her mind, and may do a few little stunts while still reclining. Then, before beginning her vocal technic in the morning, she goes through a series of breathing exercises. Just what they are is unnecessary to indicate, as each teacher may have his own, or the singer has learned for herself what forms are most beneficial.

VOCAL TECHNIC

"The pianist before the public, or the player who hopes to master the instrument in the fu-

ture, never thinks of omitting the daily task of scales and exercises; he knows that his chances for success would soon be impaired, even ruined, if he should neglect this important and necessary branch of study.

"It is exactly the same thing with the singer. She cannot afford to do without scales and exercises. If she should, the public would soon find it out. She must be in constant practice in order to produce her tones with smoothness and purity; she must also think whether she is producing them with ease. There should never be any strain, no evidence of effort. Voice production must always seem to be the easiest thing in the world. No audience likes to see painful effort in a singer's face or throat.

VOCAL PRACTICE

"The young singer should always practice with a mirror—do not forget that; she must look pleasant under all circumstances. No one cares to look at a singer who makes faces and grimaces, or scowls when she sings. This applies to any one, young or older. Singing must always seem easy, pleasant, graceful, attractive, winning. This must be the mental concept, and, acted upon, the singer will thus win her audience. I do not mean that one

should cultivate a grin when singing; that would be going to the other extreme.

"Let the singer also use a watch when she practices, in order not to overdo. I approve of a good deal of technical study, taken in small doses of ten to fifteen minutes at a time. I myself do about two hours or more, though not all technic; but I make these pauses for rest, so that I am not fatigued. After all, while we must have technic, there is so much more to singing than its technic. Technic is indeed a means to an end, more in the art of song than in almost any other form of art. Technic is the background for expressive singing, and to sing expressively is what every one should be striving for.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A SINGER

"A beautiful voice is a gift from heaven, but the cultivation of it rests with its possessor. Here in America, girls do not realize the amount of labor and sacrifice involved, or they might not be so eager to enter upon a career. They are too much taken up with teas, parties and social functions to have sufficient time to devote to vocal study and all that goes with it. There are many other things to study; some piano if possible, languages of course,

physical culture and acting, to make the body supple and graceful. I say some piano should be included, at least enough to play accompaniments at sight. But when she has mastered her song or rôle, she needs an accompanist, for she can never play the music as it should be played while she endeavors to interpret the song as that should be sung. One cannot do complete justice to both at the same time.

"In order to study all the subjects required, the girl with a voice must be willing to give most of her day to the work. This means sacrificing the social side and being willing to throw herself heart and soul into the business of adequately preparing for her career.

AMERICAN VOICES

"I find there are quantities of lovely voices here in America. The quality of the American female voice is beautiful; in no country is it finer, not even in Italy. You have good teachers here, too. Then why are there so few American singers who are properly prepared for a career? Why do we hear of so few who make good and amount to something? If the girl has means and good social connections, she is often not ready to sacrifice social gayeties

for the austere life of the student. If she is a poor girl, she frequently cannot afford to take up the subjects necessary for her higher development. Instruction is expensive here, and training for opera almost impossible. The operatic coach requires a goodly fee for his services. And when the girl has prepared several rôles where shall she find the opportunity to try them out? Inexperienced singers cannot be accepted at the Metropolitan; that is not the place for them. At the prices charged for seats the management cannot afford to engage any but the very best artists. Until there are more opera houses throughout the country, the American girl will still be obliged to go to Europe for experience and routine. In Europe it is all so much easier. Every little city and town has its own opera house, where regular performances are given and where young singers can try their wings and gain experience. The conductor will often help and coach the singer and never expect a fee for it.

THE YOUNG SINGER BEFORE AN AUDIENCE

"The singer who wishes to make a career in concert, should constantly study to do things easily and gracefully. She is gracious in man-

ner, and sings to the people as though it gave her personal pleasure to stand before them. She has a happy expression of countenance; she is simple, unaffected and sincere. More than all this her singing must be filled with sentiment and soul; it must be deeply felt or it will not touch others. Of what use will be the most elaborate technic in the world if there is no soul back of it. So the young singer cultivates this power of expression, which grows with constant effort. The artist has learned to share her gift of song with her audience, and sings straight across into the hearts of her listeners. The less experienced singer profits by her example.

"Shall the singer carry her music in a song recital, is a much discussed question. Many come on with nothing in hand. What then happens? The hands are clasped in supplication, as though praying for help. This attitude becomes somewhat harrowing when held for a whole program. Other singers toy with chain or fan, movements which may be very inappropriate to the sentiment of the song they are singing. For myself I prefer to hold in hand a small book containing the words of my songs, for it seems to be more graceful and less obtrusive than the other ways I have

mentioned. I never refer to this little book, as I know the words of my songs backward; I could rise in the middle of the night and go through the program without a glance at words or music, so thoroughly do I know what I am singing. Therefore I do not need the book of words, but I shall always carry it, no matter what the critics may say. And why should not the executive artist reassure himself by having his music with him? It seems to me a pianist would feel so much more certain of himself if he had the notes before him; he of course need not look at them, but their presence would take away the fear that is often an obsession. With the notes at hand he could let himself go, give free reign to fancy, without the terrible anxiety he must often feel.

OPERA OR CONCERT

"People often ask whether I prefer to sing in opera or concert. I always answer, I love both. I enjoy opera for many reasons; I love the concert work, and I am also very fond of oratorio. Of course in the opera I am necessarily restrained; I can never be Frieda Hempel, I must always be some one else; I must always think of the others who are playing with me. In concert I can be myself and

express myself. I get near the people; they are my friends and I am theirs. I am much in spirit with oratorio also.

COLORATURA OR DRAMATIC

"Do I think the coloratura voice will ever become dramatic? It depends on the quality of the voice. I think every dramatic singer should cultivate coloratura to some extent—should study smooth legato scales and passages. To listen to some of the dramatic rôles of to-day, one would think that smooth legato singing was a lost art. Nothing can take its place, however, and singers should realize this fact."

Miss Hempel believes that every singer, no matter how great, should realize the advantage of constant advice from a capable teacher, in order to prevent the forming of undesirable habits. She also considers Vocal Mastery implies the perfection of everything connected with singing; that is to say, perfect breath control, perfect placement of the voice, perfect tone production, together with all requisite grace, feeling and expressiveness.

WITH THE MASTER TEACHERS

XXII

DAVID BISPHAM

THE MAKING OF ARTIST SINGERS

If we were asked to name one of the best known, and best loved of American singers, the choice would surely fall on David Bispham. This artist, through his vocal, linguistic and histrionic gifts, his serious aims and high ideals, has endeared himself to musicians and music lovers alike. We are all proud of him as an American, and take a sort of personal pride in his achievements.

Mr. Bispham has been before the public as actor-singer for many years. There is no other artist in the English-speaking world who has had greater experience in all kinds of vocal work than this "Quaker Singer," as he calls himself, for he comes from Philadelphia, and is of old English, Quaker, Colonial stock. His professional début was made in London, in 1891, with the Royal English Opera Company, as the Duc De Longueville, in the beautiful Opera Comique, *The Basoche,* by Messager. The following year he appeared in

Wagnerian Music Drama at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, performing the part of Kurwenal, in *Tristan and Isolde,* without rehearsal. His adaptability to music in English, French, Italian and German, caused him to be at once accepted as a member of that distinguished company.

In 1896, Mr. Bispham joined the forces of the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, and remained there for a number of years, singing each season alternately on both sides of the ocean. Of recent years he has devoted most of his time to concerts, though he is one of the founders and officers of the Society of American Singers, with which artistic body he frequently appears in the classic operas of Mozart, Pergolesi, Donizetti and others.

My first conference with Mr. Bispham was held in his New York studio. Here, in this artistic retreat where absolute quiet reigns, though located in the heart of the great city's busy life, the noted singer teaches and works out his programs and various characterizations.

THE PROBLEM OF BREATH CONTROL

"The singer should breathe as easily and naturally as animals and people do when they

sleep," he began. "But we are awake when we sing; correct breath control, therefore, must be carefully studied, and is the result of understanding and experience. The best art conceals art. The aim is to produce tones with the utmost ease and naturalness, though these must be gained with patient toil. A child patting the keyboard with his tiny hands, is *unconsciously* natural and at ease, though he does not know what he is doing; the great pianist is *consciously* at ease because he understands principles of ease and relaxation, and has acquired the necessary control through years of training.

"The singer acquires management of the breath through correct position and action of his anatomy. The body is held erect, chest active; the network of abdominal muscles constantly gain strength as they learn to push, push, push the air up through the lungs to the windpipe, then through the mouth and nasal cavities." Mr. Bispham illustrated each point in his own person as he described it.

"When the manner of taking breath, and the way to develop the diaphragm and abdominal muscles, is understood, that is only a beginning. Management of the breath is an art in itself. The singer must know what to do with

the breath once he has taken it in, or he may let it out in quarts the moment he opens his mouth. He has to learn how much he needs for each phrase. He learns how to conserve the breath; and while it is not desirable to hold one tone to attenuation, that the gallery may gasp with astonishment, as some singers do, yet it is well to learn to do all one conveniently can with one inhalation, provided the phrase permits it.

TECHNICAL MATERIAL

"I give many vocalizes and exercises, which I invent to fit the needs of each pupil. I do not require them to be written down, simply remembered. At the next lesson quite a different set of exercises may be recommended. I also make exercises out of familiar tunes or themes from operatic airs. It will be found that technical material in the various manuals is often chosen from such sources, so why not use them in their original form. Thus while the student is studying technic he is also acquiring much beautiful material, which will be of great value to him later on.

THE STUDY OF REPERTOIRE

"Repertoire is a wide subject and offers a fascinating study to the vocal student. He

must have both imagination and sentiment, also the ability to portray, through movement and facial expression, the various moods and states of feeling indicated by words and music.

"In taking up a new rôle, I read the story to get at the kernel or plot, and see what it means. The composer first saw the words of poem or libretto, and these suggested to him suitable music. So the singer begins his work by carefully reading the words.

"I then have the music of the whole work played for me on the piano, so as to discover its trend and meaning—its content. If the composer is available I ask him to do this. I next begin to study my own part in detail, not only the important sections but the little bits, which seem so small, but are often so difficult to remember."

CHARACTERIZATION

Under this head the singer spoke at length of the difficulty some singers encounter when they endeavor to portray character, or differentiate emotions. There is endless scope in this line, to exercise intelligence and imagination.

"Some singers," continued the artist, "seem incapable of characterizing a rôle or song.

They can do what I call 'flat work,' but cannot individualize a rôle. A singer may have a beautiful voice yet not be temperamental; he may have no gift for acting, nor be able to do character work.

"At the present moment I am preparing several new rôles, three of them are of old men. It rests with me to externalize these three in such a way that they shall all be different, yet consistent with the characters as I understand them. Each make-up must be distinctive, and my work is to portray the parts as I see and feel them. I must get into the skin of each character, so to say, then act as I conceive that particular person would behave under like circumstances. Many singers cannot act, and most actors cannot sing. When the two are combined we have a singing actor, or an actor-singer. Once there was a popular belief that it was not necessary for the singer to know much about acting—if he only had a voice and could sing. The present is changing all that. Many of us realize how very much study is required to perfect this side of our art.

"In this connection I am reminded of my London début. I was to make it with the Royal English Opera Company. They heard me three times before deciding to take me on.

With this formality over, rehearsals began. I soon found that my ideas of how my rôle —an important one—was to be acted, did not always coincide with the views of the stage director, and there were ructions. The manager saw how things were going, and advised me to accept seemingly the ideas of the stage director during rehearsals, but to study acting with the highest authorities and then work out the conception after my own ideas. Accordingly, I spent an hour daily, before the morning rehearsal, with one of the finest actors of comedy to be found in London. Later in the day, after rehearsal, I spent another hour with a great tragic actor. Thus I worked in both lines, as my part was a mixture of the tragic and the comic. I put in several weeks of very hard work in this way, and felt I had gained greatly. Of course this was entirely on the histrionic side, but it gives an idea of the preparation one needs.

"When the day of the dress rehearsal arrived, I appeared on the scene in full regalia, clean shaven (I had been wearing a beard until then), and performed my rôle as I had conceived it, regardless of the peculiar ideas of the stage director. At the first performance I made a hit, and a little later was engaged for

grand opera at Covent Garden, where I remained for ten years.

KNOWLEDGE OF ANATOMY

"While I believe in understanding one's anatomy sufficiently for proper tone production, and all that goes with it, there are many peculiar and unnecessary fads and tricks resorted to by those who call themselves teachers of singing. The more fantastic the theories inculcated by these people, the more the unwary students seem to believe in them. People like to be deluded, you know. But I am not able to gratify their desires in this direction; for I can't lie about music!

"I was present at a vocal lesson given by one of these so-called instructors. 'You must sing in such a way that the tone will seem to come out of the back of your head,' he told the pupil, and he waved his arms about his head as though he were drawing the tone out visibly. Another pupil was placed flat on his back, then told to breathe as though he were asleep, and then had to sing in that position. Another teacher I know of makes pupils eject spit-balls of tissue paper at the ceiling, to learn the alleged proper control of the breath. What criminal nonsense this is!

"As I have said, I believe in knowing what is necessary about anatomy, but not in too great measure. A new book will soon be issued, I am told, which actually dissects the human body, showing every bone and muscle in any way connected with breath or voice. All this may be of interest as a matter of research, but must one go into such minutiæ in order to teach singing? I think the answer must ever be in the negative. You might as well talk to a gold-fish in a bowl and say: 'If you desire to proceed laterally to the right, kindly oscillate gently your sinister dorsal fin, and you will achieve the desired result.' Oh, Art, what sins are committed in thy name!"

IN THE STUDIO

It is often affirmed that an artist finds experience the best teacher. It must be equally true that the artist-teacher of wide experience in both performance and instruction, should be a safe guide, just because of this varied experience.

I was impressed with this fact when I recently had the privilege of visiting Mr. Bispham's studio during lesson hours, and listening to his instruction. A most interesting

sanctum is this studio, filled as it is with souvenirs and pictures of the artist's long career on the operatic stage. Here hangs a drawing in color of Bispham as Telramund, in shining chain armor; there a life-size portrait as "Beethoven," and again as himself. In the midst of all is the master, seated at a table. In front of him, at the piano, stands the student. It is an English song she is at work on, for Mr. Bispham thoroughly believes in mastering English as well as other languages.

How alert he is as he sits there; how keen of eye and ear. Not the slightest fault escapes him. He often sings the phrase himself, then calls for its repetition.

"Sing that passage again; there is a tone in it that is not pleasant—not well-sounding; make it beautiful!" "Careful of your consonants there, they are not distinct; let them be clearer, but don't make them over distinct." "Don't scoop up the ends of the phrases; make the tones this way"; and he illustrates repeatedly. "Sing this phrase in one breath if you can, if not, breathe here—" indicating the place.

The student now takes up an Italian aria. Of course the master teacher has no need of printed score; he knows the arias by heart.

He merely jots down a few remarks on a slip of paper, to be referred to later.

The aria goes quite well. At its close the singer goes to her seat and another takes her place. A voice of rich, warm timbre. More English—and it must be most exact, to suit Mr. Bispham's fastidious ear.

"Make the word *fire* in *one* syllable, not *two*. Do not open the mouth quite so wide on the word *desire*, for, by doing so you lose the balance and the tone is not so good."

VOCALIZES

Another student—with a fine tenor—was asked to vocalize for a number of minutes. He sang ascending and descending tone-figures, sometimes doing them in one breath, at others taking a fresh breath at top. Some of the syllables used were: la, ma, may, and mi. He then sang single tones, swelling and diminishing each. It was found that passing from *forte* to *piano* was much more difficult than swelling from soft to loud.

The aria "Be not afraid," was now taken up; it was pronounced one of the most difficult solos ever written, and a very valuable composition for vocal training.

"You sing that phrase too loud," cautioned

the instructor. "This is not a human being who is speaking, rather it is a heavenly voice. That high note of the phrase should be made softer, more ethereal. Make it a *young tone* —put the quality of Spring into it. The whole thing should be more spiritual or spiritualized. Now go through it again from beginning to end."

When this was finished a halt was called; there had been enough work done for that day. Soon the class was dismissed. The young singers—some if not all of them known upon the concert stage—filed out. One young woman remained; she was to have a drama lesson. The master of singing showed himself equally efficient as master of English diction for the spoken drama.

And here, for a time, we must leave him at his work.

XXIII

OSCAR SAENGER

USE OF RECORDS IN VOCAL STUDY

Mr. Oscar Saenger has been termed "maker of artists," since a number of our great singers have come from under his capable hands. He has a rare gift for imparting instruction in a way that is concise and convincing. A man of wide experience, profound knowledge of his subject, commanding personality and winning courtesy, he impresses all who come within his radius that he knows whereof he speaks. A man who "knows what he knows" is one to be followed.

Mr. Saenger had just returned from a season of travel over America as far as the Coast. A most profitable trip he called it, filled with many interesting and unique experiences. He had been lecturing also, in a number of cities, on his new method of vocal study with the aid of the Victor Talking Machine. When he learned I had come expressly to ask for his ideas on vocal technic and study, he said:

"I think you will be interested to hear about

my latest hobby, the study of singing with the aid of records." Then he plunged at once into the most absorbingly interesting account of his ideas and achievements in this line I had ever listened to.

TEACHER, ARTIST AND ACCOMPANIST IN ONE

"This is my own idea, of combining the teacher, artist and accompanist in one trinity," he began. "And, by the way, my idea is now patented in Washington. It is the result of nine years' thought and labor, before the idea could be brought out in its finished form. The design has been to make the method and its elucidation so simple that the girl from a small town can understand it.

"The method consists of twenty lessons for each of the five kinds of voices: Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Baritone and Bass. Each portfolio holds twenty records, together with a book containing minute directions for studying and using the records. I believe that any one, with good intelligence, who wishes to learn to sing, can take the book and records and begin his studies, even though he has never sung before. He can thus prepare himself for future lessons. For you must understand this method is not meant to replace the teacher, but

to aid the teacher. I can assure you it aids him in ways without number. It gives him a perfect exemplar to illustrate his principles. If he be fatigued, or unable to sing the passage in question, here is an artist who is never wearied, who is always ready to do it for him. I myself constantly use the records in my lessons. If I have taught a number of consecutive hours, it is a relief to turn to the artist's record and save my own voice.

SIMPLICITY

"As I have said, the design has been to make everything plain and simple. I wrote the book and sent it to the Victor people. They returned it, saying I had written an excellent book, but it was not simple enough. They proposed sending a man to me who was neither a musician nor a singer. If I could make my meaning clear enough for him to understand, it was likely the girl from a little Western town could grasp it.

"So this man came and we worked together. If I talked about head tones, he wanted to know what I meant; if about throaty tones, I had to make these clear to him. When he understood, I was sure any one could understand.

"Thus the books as they stand came into

being. The records themselves represent an immense amount of care and effort. Will you believe we had to make over two thousand in order to secure the one hundred needed for the present series? The slightest imperfection is enough to render an otherwise perfect record useless. Even the artists themselves would sometimes become discouraged at the enormous difficulties. It is nerve-racking work, for one must be on tension all the time.

IMITATION A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE

"If you are interested, I will go a little more into detail. The main idea of this unique method of study, is imitation. Every human being likes to imitate—from the tiny child to the adult. Acting upon this idea, we take the artist as model. Everything the model does, the student strives to imitate. By means of the record, it is possible for the student to do this over and over again, until he has learned to copy it as accurately as it is possible. And here is where the knowledge and experience of the teacher come in. During the lesson he tests each tone, each phrase, advising the pupil how nearly he approaches the perfect model, or showing him his faults and why he does not succeed in imitating the model more correctly."

FOR BEGINNERS

"Do you mean to say, Mr. Saenger, that this method of vocal study can be taken up by one who knows really nothing of the voice, or singing, and can be used with success; that such a person can become a singer through self-study?"

"It is indeed possible," was the answer; "and it is being done every day. If the student has much intelligence, determination and concentration, she can learn to sing from these directions and these records. They are a great boon to young aspirants in small towns, where there are really no good teachers. In such places local teachers can study and teach from these records.

"Again, you often find people too shy, or too ashamed to go to a teacher for a voice trial or lessons. They want to sing—every one would like to do that; but they don't know how to go at it. With these records they can begin to study, and thus get ready for later lessons. With these records those who are far from a music center can have the benefit of expert instruction at small cost. I might work with a pupil for several months in the ordinary way—without the records—and not be able to teach

him even with half the accuracy and quickness obtainable by the new method.

THE ACCOMPANIST

"All singers know how important, how necessary it is to have services of an expert accompanist. The student of this method has one at hand every hour of the day; a tireless accompanist, who is willing to repeat without complaint, as often as necessary.

THE SPEAKING VOICE

"A very important branch of the work, for the would-be singer, is to cultivate the speaking voice. Tones in speaking should always be made beautiful and resonant. Even in children a pleasant quality of voice in speaking can be acquired. Mothers and teachers can be trained to know and produce beautiful tones. The ear must be cultivated to know a pure, beautiful tone and to love it.

BREATHING EXERCISES

"The management of the breath is a most important factor, as the life of the tone depends on the continuance of the breath. The student must cultivate the power of quickly inhaling a full breath and of exhaling it so grad-

ually that she can sing a phrase lasting from ten to twenty seconds. This needs months of arduous practice. In all breathing, inhale through the nose. The lower jaw during singing should be entirely relaxed.

"The tone should be focused just back of the upper front teeth. The way to place the tone forward is to *think* it forward. The student must think the tone into place.

"To 'attack' a tone is to sing it at once, without any scooping, and with free open throat. When the throat is tightened the student loses power to attack her tones in the right way.

PHRASING

"Phrasing, in a limited sense, is simply musical punctuation. In its broader sense it is almost synonymous with interpretation. For it has to do not only with musical punctuation but with the grouping of tones and words in such a way that the composition is rendered intelligible as a whole, so as to express the ideas of the composer. This is where the intellectual and musical qualities of the singer are brought into requisition. She must grasp the content, whether it be song or aria, in order to effect this grouping intelligently. *Accent, crescendo* and *diminuendo* are the most impor-

tant factors in phrasing. From the very beginning the student should be careful how and where she takes breath and gives accent; there must always be a reason, and thought will generally make the reason clear.

TONE PRODUCTION

"The first thing to be considered is the position of the body; for beauty of tone cannot be obtained unless all efforts harmonize to produce the desired result. An easy, graceful, buoyant position is essential; it can be cultivated in front of a mirror, from the first lesson.

"Tone production is the result of thought. Picture to yourself a beautiful tone; sing it on the vowel Ah. If you stood in rapture before an entrancing scene you would exclaim, Ah, how beautiful. Producing a beautiful tone rests on certain conditions. First, breath control; Second, Freedom of throat; Third, Correct focus of tone.

"We know that a stiff jaw and tongue are the greatest hindrances to the emission of good tone. Muscles of chin and tongue must be trained to become relaxed and flexible. Do not stiffen the jaw or protrude the chin, else your appearance will be painful and your tones faulty.

"To think the tone forward is quite as important as to sing it forward. Without the mental impression of correct placing, the reality cannot exist. It is much better to think the tone forward for five minutes and sing one minute, than to practice the reverse. One should practice in fifteen-minute periods and rest at least ten minutes between. The student should never sing more than two hours a day—one in the morning and one in the afternoon. As most singers love their work, many are inclined to overdo.

"Do not tamper with the two or three extreme upper or lower tones of your voice lest you strain and ruin it permanently. Never practice when suffering from a cold.

"Ideal attack is the tone which starts without any scooping, breathiness or explosiveness. Breathe noiselessly, the secret of which is to breathe from down, up. Faulty emissions of tone are: nasal, guttural, throaty and tremulous. I will give you examples of all these from the record No. 33, which will show you first the fault and then the perfect example. If the pupil studies these perfect emissions of tone and tries to imitate them, there is no need for her to have the common faults mentioned.

SUSTAINED TONES

"The next step is to study sustained tones. As you see the artist begins in the middle of her voice—always the best way—and sings a whole tone on A, with the syllable Ah, always waiting a whole measure for the pupil to imitate the tone. Next she sings A flat and so on down to lower A, the pupil imitating each tone. She now returns to middle A and ascends by half steps to E natural, the pupil copying each tone after it is sung by the artist.

"The tone should be free, round and full, but not loud, and the aim be to preserve the same quality throughout. Do not throw or push the tone, *but spin it.*

UNITING SEVERAL TONES

"We first begin by uniting two tones, smoothly and evenly, then three in the same way. After each pair or group of tones, the accompaniment is repeated and the pupil imitates what the artist has just sung. Now comes the uniting of five tones, up and down; after this the scale of one octave. The scale should be sung easily with moderate tone quality. A slight accent can be given to the first and last tones of the scale. We all realize the

scale is one of the most important exercises for the building of the voice; the preceding exercises have prepared for it.

ARPEGGIOS

"For imparting flexibility to the voice, nothing can exceed the Arpeggio, but like all vocal exercises, it must be produced with precision of tone, singing each interval clearly, with careful intonation, always striving for beauty of tone.

"There are various forms of arpeggios to be used. The second form is carried a third above the octave; the third form a fifth above. This makes an exercise which employs every tone in the scale save one, and gives practice in rapid breathing. Remember, that the note before taking breath is slightly shortened, in order to give time for taking breath, without disturbing the rhythm.

THE TRILL

"The trill is perhaps the most difficult of all vocal exercises, unless the singer is blessed with a natural trill, which is a rare gift. We begin with quarter notes, then add eighths and sixteenths. This exercise, if practiced daily, will produce the desired result. It is taken on each tone of the voice—trilling in major seconds.

VOCALIZES

"The purpose of vocalizes is to place and fix the voice accurately and to develop taste, while singing rhythmically and elegantly. The records give some Concone exercises, ably interpreted by one of our best known voices. You hear how even and beautiful are the tones sung, and you note the pauses of four measures between each phrase, to allow the student to repeat the phrase, as before.

"I firmly believe this method of study is bound to revolutionize vocal study and teaching. You see it goes to the very foundation, and trains the student to imitate the best models. It even goes farther back, to the children, teaching them how to speak and sing correctly, always making beautiful tones, without harshness or shouting. Young children can learn to sing tones and phrases from the records. Furthermore, I believe the time is coming when the *technic and interpretation of every instrument will be taught in this way.*

"It is my intention to follow up this set of foundational records by others which will demonstrate the interpretation of songs and arias as they are sung by our greatest artists. The outlook is almost limitless.

"And now, do you think I have answered your questions about tone production, breath control and the rest? Perhaps I have, as convincingly as an hour's talk can do."

XXIV

HERBERT WITHERSPOON

MEMORY, IMAGINATION, ANALYSIS

No doubt the serious teacher, who may be occupied in any branch of musical activity, has often pictured to himself what an ideal institution of musical art might be like, if all students assembled should study thoroughly their particular instrument, together with all that pertained to it. They should by all means possess talent, intelligence, industry, and be far removed from a superficial attitude toward their chosen field. The studio used for instruction in this imagined institution, should also be ideal, quiet, airy, homelike, artistic.

Some such vision perhaps floats before the minds of some of us teachers, when we are in the mood to dream of ideal conditions under which we would like to see our art work conducted.

It has been possible for Mr. Herbert Witherspoon, the distinguished basso and teacher, to make such a dream-picture come true. For he has established an institution of vocal art—

in effect if not in name—where all the subjects connected with singing, are considered and taught in the order of their significance. Not less ideal is the building which contains these studios, for Mr. Witherspoon has fitted up his private home as a true abiding place for the muse.

At the close of a busy day, marked like all the rest with a full complement of lessons, the master teacher was willing to relax a little and speak of the work in which he is so deeply absorbed. He apologized for having run over the time of the last lesson, saying he never could teach by the clock.

"I do not like to call this a school," he began, "although it amounts to one in reality, but only in so far as we take up the various subjects connected with vocal study. I consider languages of the highest importance; we have them taught here. There are classes in analysis, in pedagogy—teaching teachers how to instruct others. We have an excellent master for acting and for stage deportment: I advise that students know something of acting, even if they do not expect to go in for opera; they learn how to carry themselves and are more graceful and self-possessed before an audience.

"The work has developed far beyond my ex-

pectations. There are over two hundred students, and I have eight assistants, who have been trained by me and know my ways and methods. Some of these give practice lessons to students, who alternate them with the lessons given by me. These lessons are quite reasonable, and in combination with my work, give the student daily attention.

"My plan is not to accept every applicant who comes, but to select the most promising. The applicants must measure up to a certain standard before they can enter. To this one fact is due much of our success."

"And what are these requirements?"

"Voice, to begin with; youth (unless the idea is to teach), good looks, musical intelligence, application. If the candidate possesses these requisites, we begin to work. In three months' time it can be seen whether the student is making sufficient progress to come up to our standard. Those who do not are weeded out. You can readily see that as a result of this weeding process, we have some very good material and fine voices to work with.

"We have many musicals and recitals, both public and private, where young singers have an opportunity to try their wings. There is a most generous, unselfish spirit among the stu-

dents; they rejoice in each others' success, with never a hint of jealousy. We have had a number of recitals in both Æolian and Carnegie Halls, given by the artist students this season. On these occasions the other students always attend and take as much interest as though they were giving the recital themselves."

BEL CANTO

"You have remarked lately that 'singers are realizing that the lost art of *bel canto* is the thing to strive for and they are now searching for it.' Can you give a little more light on this point?"

"I hardly meant to say that in any sense the art of bel canto was lost; how could it be? Many singers seem to attach some uncanny significance to the term. Bel canto means simply *beautiful singing.* When you have perfect breath control, and distinct, artistic enunciation, you will possess bel canto, because you will produce your tones and your words beautifully.

"Because these magic words are in the Italian tongue does not mean that they apply to something only possessed by Italians. Not at all. Any one can sing beautifully who does so with ease and naturalness, the American just

as well as those of any other countries. In fact I consider American voices, in general, better trained than those of Italy, Germany or France. The Italian, in particular, has very little knowledge of the scientific side; he usually sings by intuition.

"We ought to have our own standards in judging American voices; until we do so, we will be constantly comparing them with the voices of foreign singers. The quality of the American voice is different from the quality found in the voices of other countries. To my mind the best women's voices are found right here in our midst.

MEMORY

"I have also said that there are three great factors which should form the foundation stones upon which the singer should rear his structure of musical achievement. These factors are Memory, Imagination, Analysis. I have put memory first because it is the whole thing, so to say. The singer without memory—a cultivated memory—does not get far. Memory lies at the very foundation of his work, and must continue with it the whole journey through, from the bottom to the top. In the beginning you think a beautiful tone,

you try to reproduce it. When you come to it again you must remember just how you did it before. Each time you repeat the tone this effort of memory comes in, until at last it has become second nature to remember and produce the result; you now begin to do so automatically.

"As you advance there are words to remember as well as notes and tones. Memory, of course, is just as necessary for the pianist. He must be able to commit large numbers of notes, phrases and passages. In his case there are a number of keys to grasp at once, but the singer can sing but one tone at a time. Both notes and words should be memorized, so the singer can come before the audience without being confined to the printed page. When acting is added there is still more to remember. Back of memory study lies concentration; without concentration little can be accomplished in any branch of art.

IMAGINATION

"The central factor is imagination; what can be done without it! Can you think of a musician, especially a singer, without imagination? He may acquire the letter—that is, execute the notes correctly, but the performance is

dead, without life or soul. With imagination he comprehends what is the inner meaning of the text, the scene; also what the composer had in mind when he wrote. Then he learns to express these emotions in his own voice and action, through the imaginative power, which will color his tones, influence his action, render his portrayal instinct with life. Imagination in some form is generally inherent in all of us. If it lies dormant, it can be cultivated and brought to bear upon the singer's work. This is absolutely essential.

ANALYSIS

"I have put analysis last because it is the crowning virtue, the prime necessity. We study analysis here in the studios, learning how to separate music into its component parts, together with simple chord formations, general form and structure of the pieces, and so on. Can you comprehend the dense ignorance of many music students on these subjects? They will come here to me, never having analyzed a bit of music in their lives, having not an inkling of what chord structure and form in music mean. If they played piano even a little, they could hardly escape getting a small notion of chord formation. But frequently vocal stu-

dents know nothing of the piano. They are too apt to be superficial. It is an age of superficiality—and cramming: we see these evils all the way from the college man down. I am a Yale man and don't like to say anything about college government, yet I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that men may spend four years going through college and yet not be educated when they come out. Most of us are in too much of a hurry, and so fail to take time enough to learn things thoroughly; above all we never stop to analyze.

"Analysis should begin at the very outset of our vocal or instrumental study. We analyze the notes of the music we are singing, and a little later its form. We analyze the ideas of the composer and also our own thoughts and ideas, to try and bring them in harmony with his. After analyzing the passage before us, we may see it in a totally different light, and so phrase and deliver it with an entirely different idea from what we might have done without this intelligent study."

CONSCIOUS OR UNCONSCIOUS CONTROL

"Do you advise conscious action of the parts comprising the vocal instrument, or do you prefer unconscious control of the instrument, with

thought directed to the ideal quality in tone production and delivery?" was asked.

"By all means unconscious control," was the emphatic answer. "We wish to produce beautiful sounds; if the throat is open, the breathing correct, and we have a mental concept of that beautiful sound, we are bound to produce it. It might be almost impossible to produce correct tones if we thought constantly about every muscle in action. There is a great deal of nonsense talked and written about the diaphragm, vocal chords and other parts of the anatomy. It is all right for the teacher who wishes to be thoroughly trained, to know everything there is to know about the various organs and muscles; I would not discourage this. But for the young singer I consider it unnecessary. Think supremely of the beautiful tones you desire to produce; listen for them with the outer ear—and the inner ear—that is to say—mentally—and you will hear them. Meanwhile, control is becoming more and more habitual, until it approaches perfection and at last becomes automatic. When that point is reached, your sound producing instrument does the deed, while your whole attention is fixed on the interpretation of a master work,

the performance of which requires your undivided application. If there is action, you control that in the same way until it also becomes automatic; then both singing and acting are spontaneous."

DOES THE SINGER HEAR HIMSELF?

This question was put to Mr. Witherspoon, who answered:

"The singer of course hears himself, and with study learns to hear himself better. In fact I believe the lack of this part of vocal training is one of the greatest faults of the day, and that the singer should depend more upon hearing the sound he makes than upon feeling the sound. In other words, train the *ear,* the court of ultimate resort, and the only judge—and forget sensation as much as possible, for the latter leads to a million confusions.

"Undoubtedly a singer hears in his own voice what his auditors do not hear, for he also hears with his inner ear, but the singer must learn to hear his own voice as others hear it, which he can do perfectly well. Here we come to analysis again.

"The phonograph records teach us much in this respect, although I never have considered

that the phonograph reproduces the human voice. It comes near it in some cases, utterly fails in others, and the best singers do not always make the best or most faithful reproductions."

XXV

YEATMAN GRIFFITH

CAUSATION

"The causation of beautiful singing can only be found through a pure and velvety production of the voice, and this is acquired in no other way than by a thorough understanding of what constitutes a perfect beginning—that is the attack or start of the tone. If the tone has a perfect beginning it must surely have a perfect ending."

Thus Mr. Yeatman Griffith began a conference on the subject of vocal technic and the art of song. He had had a day crowded to the brim with work—although all days were usually alike filled—yet he seemed as fresh and unwearied as though the day had only just begun. One felt that here was a man who takes true satisfaction in his work of imparting to others; his work is evidently not a tiresome task but a real joy. Mrs. Griffith shares this joy of work with her husband. "It is most ideal," she says; "we have so grown into it together; we love it."

As is well known, this artist pair returned to their home land at the outbreak of the war, after having resided and taught for five years in London, and previous to that for one year in Florence, Italy. Of course they were both singers, giving recitals together, like the Henschels, and appearing in concert and oratorio. But constant public activity is incompatible with a large teaching practice. One or the other has to suffer. "We chose to do the teaching and sacrifice our public career," said Mr. Griffith. During the five years in which these artists have resided in New York, they have accomplished much; their influence has been an artistic impulse toward the ideals of beautiful singing. Among their many artist pupils who are making names for themselves, it may be mentioned that Florence Macbeth, a charming coloratura soprano, owes much of her success to their careful guidance.

"Michael Angelo has said," continued Mr. Griffith, "that 'a perfect start is our first and greatest assurance of a perfect finish.' And nowhere is this precept more truly exemplified than in vocal tone production. The tone must have the right beginning, then it will be right all through. A faulty beginning is to blame for most of the vocal faults and sins of singers.

Our country is full of beautiful natural voices; through lack of understanding many of them, even when devoting time and money to study, never become more than mediocre, when they might have developed into really glorious voices if they had only had the right kind of treatment.

TONE PLACEMENT

"We hear a great deal about tone placement in these days; the world seems to have gone mad over the idea. But it is an erroneous idea. How futile to attempt to place the tone in any particular spot in the anatomy. You can focus the tone, but you cannot place it. There is but one place for it to come from and no other place. It is either emitted with artistic effect or it is not. If not, then there is stiffness and contraction, and the trouble ought to be remedied at once.

"Every one agrees that if the vocal instrument were something we could see, our task would be comparatively easy. It is because the instrument is hidden that so many false theories about it have sprung up. One teacher advocates a high, active chest; therefore the chest is held high and rigid, while the abdominal muscles are deprived of the strength

they should have. Another advises throwing the abdomen forward; still another squares the shoulders and stiffens the neck. These things do not aid in breath control in the least; on the contrary they induce rigidity which is fatal to easy, natural tone emission.

IN THE BEGINNING

"When the pupil comes to me, we at once establish natural, easy conditions of body and an understanding of the causes which produce good tone. We then begin to work on the vowels. They are the backbone of good singing. When they become controlled, they are then preceded by consonants. Take the first vowel, A; it can be preceded by all the consonants of the alphabet one after another, then each vowel in turn can be treated in the same way. We now have syllables; the next step is to use words. Here is where difficulties sometimes arise for the student. The word becomes perfectly easy to sing if vowels and consonants are properly produced. When they are not, words become obstacles. Correct understanding will quickly obviate this.

BREATH CONTROL

"Breath control is indeed a vital need, but it should not be made a bugbear to be greatly feared. The young student imagines he must inflate the lungs almost to bursting, in order that he may take a breath long enough to sing a phrase. Then, as soon as he opens his lips, he allows half the air he has taken in to escape, before he has uttered a sound. With such a beginning he can only gasp a few notes of the phrase. Or he distends the muscles at the waist to the fullest extent and fancies this is the secret of deep breathing. In short, most students make the breathing and breath control a very difficult matter indeed, when it is, or should be an act most easy and natural. They do not need the large quantity of breath they imagine they do; for a much smaller amount will suffice to do the work. I tell them, 'Inhale simply and naturally, as though you inhaled the fragrance of a flower. And when you open your lips after this full natural breath, do not let the breath escape; the vocal chords will make the tone, if you understand how to make a perfect start. If the action is correct, the vocal chords will meet; they will not be held apart nor will they crowd each other. Allow

the diaphragm and respiratory muscles to do their work, never forcing them; then you will soon learn what breath control in singing means. Remember again, not a particle of breath should be allowed to escape. Every other part of the apparatus must be permitted to do its work, otherwise there will be interference somewhere.'

CAUSATION

"Everything pertaining to the study of vocal technic and the art of singing may be summed up in the one word—Causation. A cause underlies every effect. If you do not secure the quality of tone you desire, there must be a reason for it. You evidently do not understand the cause which will produce the effect. That is the reason why singers possessing really beautiful voices produce uneven effects and variable results. They may sing a phrase quite perfectly at one moment. A short time after they may repeat the same phrase in quite a different way and not at all perfectly. One night they will sing very beautifully; the next night you might hardly recognize the voice, so changed would be its quality. This would not be the case if they understood causation. A student, rightly taught, should know the cause

for everything he does, how he does thus and so and why he does it. A singer should be able to produce the voice correctly, no matter in what position the rôle he may be singing may require the head or body to be in. In opera the head or body may be placed in difficult unnatural positions, but these should not interfere with good tone production.

REGISTERS

"I am asked sometimes if I teach registers of the voice. I can say decidedly no, I do not teach registers. The voice should be one and entire, from top to bottom, and should be produced as such, no matter in what part of the voice you sing. Throughout the voice the same instrument is doing the work. So, too, with voices of different caliber, the coloratura, lyric and dramatic. Each and all of these may feel the dramatic spirit of the part, but the lighter quality of the voice may prevent the coloratura from expressing it. The world recognizes the dramatic singer in the size of the voice and of the person. From an artistic point of view, however, there are two ways of looking at the question, since the lyric voice may have vivid dramatic instincts, and may be able to bring them out with equal or even

greater intensity than the purely dramatic organ.

VOCAL MASTERY

"Vocal Mastery is acquired through correct understanding of what constitutes pure vowel sounds, and such control of the breath as will enable one to convert every atom of breath into singing tone. This establishes correct action of the vocal chords and puts the singer in possession of the various tints of the voice.

"When the diaphragm and respiratory muscles support the breath sufficiently and the vocal chords are permitted to do their work, you produce pure tone. Many singers do not understand these two vital principles. They either sing with too much relaxation of the diaphragm and respiratory muscles, or too much rigidity. Consequently the effort becomes local instead of constitutional, which renders the tone hard and strident and variable to pitch. Again the vocal chords are either forced apart or pinched together, with detriment to tone production.

"The real value of control is lost when we attempt to control the singing instrument and the breath by seeking a place for the tone the singing instrument produces. When the vo-

cal chords are allowed to produce pure vowels, correct action is the result and with proper breath support, Vocal Mastery can be assured."

XXVI

J. H. DUVAL

SOME SECRETS OF BEAUTIFUL SINGING

A YOUNG French girl had just sung a group of songs in her own language and had won acclaim from the distinguished company present. They admired the rich quality of her voice, her easy, spontaneous tone production and clear diction. A brilliant future was predicted for the young singer. One critic of renown remarked: "It is a long time since I have heard a voice so well placed and trained."

"And who is your teacher?" she was asked.

"It is Mr. Duval; I owe everything to him. He has really made my voice; I have never had another teacher and all my success will be due to him," she answered.

We at once expressed a desire to meet Mr. Duval and hear from his own lips how such results were attained.

A meeting was easily arranged and we arrived at the appointed hour, just in time to hear one of the brilliant students of this American-French singing master.

Mr. Duval is young, slim and lithe of figure, with sensitive, refined features, which grow very animated as he speaks. He has a rich fund of humor and an intensity of utterance that at once arrests the listener. He came forward to greet the visitor with simple cordiality, saying he was pleased we could hear one of his latest "finds."

The young tenor was at work on an air from *Tosca.* His rich, vibrant voice, of large power and range and of real Caruso-like quality, poured forth with free and natural emission. With what painstaking care this wise teacher aided him to mold each tone, each phrase, till it attained the desired effect. Being a singer himself, Mr. Duval is able to show and demonstrate as well as explain. He does both with the utmost clearness and with unfailing interest and enthusiasm. Indeed his interest in each pupil in his charge is unstinted.

The lesson over, Mr. Duval came over to us. "There is a singer I shall be proud of," he said. "Several years ago I taught him for a few months, giving him the principles of voice placement and tone production. This was in Europe. I had not seen him since then till recently, when circumstances led him to New York. He never forgot what he had previ-

ously learned with me. He now has a lesson every day and is a most industrious worker. I believe he has a fortune in that voice. Next season will see him launched, and he will surely make a sensation."

"Will you give some idea of the means by which you accomplish such results?"

"The means are very simple and natural. So many students are set on the wrong track by being told to do a multitude of things that are unnecessary, even positively harmful. For instance, they are required to sing scales on the vowels, A, E, I, O, U. I only use the vowel Ah, for exercises, finding the others are not needed, especially excluding E and U as injurious. Indeed one of the worst things a young voice can do is to sing scales on E and U, for these contract the muscles of the lips. Another injurious custom is to sing long, sustained tones in the beginning. This I do not permit.

"After telling you the things I forbid, I must enlighten you as to our plan of study.

"The secret of correct tone emission is entire relaxation of the lips. I tell the pupil, the beginner, at the first lesson, to sing the vowel Ah as loudly and as deeply as possible, thinking constantly of relaxed lips and loose lower jaw.

Ah is the most natural vowel and was used exclusively in the old Italian school of Bel Canto. Long sustained tones are too difficult. One should sing medium fast scales at first. If we begin with the long sustained tone, the young singer is sure to hold the voice in his throat, or if he lets go, a tremolo will result. Either a throaty, stiff tone or a tremolo will result from practicing the single sustained tone.

"Singing pianissimo in the beginning is another fallacy. This is one of the most difficult accomplishments and should be reserved for a later period of development.

"The young singer adds to scales various intervals, sung twice in a breath, beginning, not at the extreme of the lower voice, but carried up as high as he can comfortably reach. I believe in teaching high tones early, and in showing the pupil how to produce the head voice. Not that I am a high tone specialist," he added smiling, "for I do not sacrifice any part of the voice to secure the upper notes. But after all it is the high portion of the voice that requires the most study, and that is where so many singers fail.

"The young student practices these first exercises, and others, two half hours daily, at least two hours after eating, and comes to me

three times a week. I suggest she rest one day in each week, during which she need not sing at all, but studies other subjects connected with her art. As the weeks go by, the voice, through relaxed lips and throat and careful training, grows richer and more plentiful. One can almost note its development from day to day.

WORDS IN THE VOICE

"When the time comes to use words, the important thing is to put *the words in the voice, not the voice in the words,* to quote Juliani, the great teacher, with whom I was associated in Paris. More voices have been ruined by the stiff, exaggerated use of the lips in pronouncing, than in any other way. When we put the words in the voice, in an easy, natural way, we have bel canto.

"Another thing absolutely necessary is breath support. Hold up the breath high in the body, for high tones, though always with the throat relaxed. This point is not nearly enough insisted upon by teachers of singing.

"The points I have mentioned already prove that a vocal teacher who desires the best results in his work with others, must know how to sing

himself; he should have had wide experience in concert and opera before attempting to lead others along these difficult paths. Because a man can play the organ and piano and has accompanied singers is not the slightest cause for thinking he can train voices in the art of song. I have no wish to speak against so-called teachers of singing, but say this in the interests of unsuspecting students.

"It is impossible," continued Mr. Duval, "to put the whole method of vocal training into a few sentences. The student advances gradually and naturally, but surely, from the beginnings I have indicated, to the trill, the pizzicati, to more rapid scales, to learning the attack, and so on. Of course diction plays a large part in the singer's development. With the first song the student learns to put other vowels in the same voice with which the exercises on Ah have been sung, and to have them all of the same size, easily and loosely pronounced. Never permit the pronunciation to be too broad for the voice. The pronunciation should never be mouthed, but should flow into the stream of the breath without causing a ripple. This is bel canto!

"In teaching I advise two pupils sharing the

hour, for while one is singing the other can rest the voice and observe what is being taught. It is too fatiguing to a young voice to expect it to work a full half hour without rest.

"I was teaching in my Paris studio for a number of months after the war started, before coming to America. It is my intention, in future, to divide my time between New York and Paris. I like teaching in the French capital for the reason I can bring out my pupils in opera there. I am also pleased to teach in my own land, for the pleasant connections I have made here, and for the fresh, young American voices which come to me to be trained."

VOCAL MASTERY

"What is Vocal Mastery? There are so many kinds! Every great artist has his own peculiar manner of accomplishing results—his own vocal mastery. Patti had one kind, Maurel another, Lehmann still another. Caruso also may be considered to have his own vocal mastery, inasmuch as he commands a vocal technic which enables him to interpret any rôle that lies within his power and range. The greatest singer of to-day, Shalyapin, has also his individual vocal mastery, closely re-

sembling the sort that enabled Maurel to run such a gamut of emotions with such astonishing command and resource.

"In fine, as every great artist is different from his compeers, there can be no fixed and fast standard of vocal mastery, except the mastery of doing a great thing convincingly."

XXVII

THE CODA

A RESUMÉ

THE student, seeking light on the many problems of vocal technic, the training for concert and opera, how to get started in the profession, and kindred subjects of vital importance, has doubtless found, in the foregoing talks a rich fund of help and suggestion. It is from such high sources that a few words of personal experience and advice, have often proved to be to the young singer a beacon light, showing what to avoid and what to follow. It were well to gather up these strands of suggestion from great artists and weave them into a strong bulwark of precept and example, so that the student may be kept within the narrow path of sound doctrine and high endeavor.

At the very outset, two points must be borne in mind:

1. Each and every voice and mentality is individual.
2. The artist has become a law unto himself; it

is not possible for him to make rules for others.

First, as to difference in voices. When it is considered that the human instrument, unlike any fabricated by the hand of man, is a purely personal instrument, subject to endless variation through variety in formation of mouth and throat cavities, also physical conditions of the anatomy, it is no cause for wonder that the human instrument should differ in each individual. Then think of all sorts and conditions of mentality, environment, ambitions and ideals. It is a self evident fact that the vocal instrument must be a part of each person, of whom there are "no two alike."

Artists in general have strongly expressed themselves on this point: most of them agree with Galli-Curci, when she says: "There are as many kinds of voices as there are persons; therefore it seems to me each voice should be treated in the manner best suited to its possessor." "Singing is such an individual thing, after all," says Anna Case; "it is a part of one's very self." "Each person has a different mentality and a different kind of voice," says Martinelli; "indeed there are as many qualities of voice as there are people."

Granting, then, that there are no two voices and personalities in the world, exactly alike, it follows, as a natural conclusion, that the renowned vocalist, who has won his or her way from the beginning up to fame and fortune, realizes that her instrument and her manner of training and handling it are peculiarly personal. As she has won success through certain means and methods, she considers those means belong to her, in the sense that they especially suit her particular instrument. She is then a law unto herself and is unwilling to lay down any laws for others. Geraldine Farrar does not imply there is only one right way to train the voice, and she has found that way. In speaking of her method of study, she says: "These things seem best for my voice, and this is the way I work. But, since each voice is different, my ways might not suit any one else. I have no desire to lay down rules for others; I can only speak of my own experience."

Galli-Curci says: "The singer who understands her business must know just how she produces tones and vocal effects. She can then do them at all times, even under adverse circumstances, when nervous or not in the mood. I have developed the voice and trained it in the way that seemed to me best for it.

How can any other person tell you how that is to be done?"

"It rests with the singer what she will do with her voice—how she will develop it," remarks Mme. Homer. Martinelli says: "The voice is a hidden instrument and eventually its fate must rest with its possessor. After general principles are understood, a singer must work them out according to his ability." Florence Easton remarks: "Each singer who has risen, who has found herself, knows by what path she climbed, but the path she found might not do for another."

Instead of considering this reticence on the part of the successful singer, to explain the ways and means which enabled him to reach success, in the light of a selfish withholding of advice which would benefit the young student, we rather look upon it as a worthy and conscientious desire not to lead any one into paths which might not be best for his or her instrument.

In the beginning the student needs advice from an expert master, and is greatly benefited by knowing how the great singers have achieved. Later on, when principles have become thoroughly understood, the young singers learn what is best for their own voices; they,

too, become a law unto themselves, capable of continuing the development of their own voices in the manner best suited to this most individual of all instruments.

AMERICAN VOICES

We often hear slighting things said of the quality of American voices, especially the speaking voice. They are frequently compared to the beauty of European voices, to the disparagement of those of our own country. Remembering the obloquy cast upon the American voice, it is a pleasure to record the views of some of the great singers on this point. "There are quantities of girls in America with good voices, good looks and a love for music," asserts Mme. Easton. Mme. Hempel says: "I find there are quantities of lovely voices here in America. The quality of the American female voice is beautiful; in no country is it finer, not even in Italy." Herbert Witherspoon, who has such wonderful experience in training voices, states: "We ought to have our own standards in judging American voices; until we do so, we will be constantly comparing them with the voices of foreign singers. The quality of the American voice is different from the quality found in the voices of other countries.

To my mind, the best women's voices are found right here in our midst." And he adds: "Any one can sing beautifully who does so with ease and naturalness, the American just as well as those of any other country. In fact I consider American voices, in general, better trained than those of Italy, Germany or France. The Italian, in particular, has very little knowledge of the scientific side; he usually sings by intuition."

AMERICAN VOICE TEACHERS

If this be accepted, that American voices are better trained than those of other countries, and there is no reason to doubt the statement of masters of such standing, it follows there must be competent instructors in the art of song right in our own land. Mme. Easton agrees with this. "There are plenty of good vocal teachers in America," she says, "not only in New York City, but in other large cities of this great country. There is always the problem, however, of securing just the right kind of a teacher. For a teacher may be excellent for one voice but not for another." Morgan Kingston asserts: "There is no need for an American to go out of his own country for vocal instruction or languages; all can be

learned right here at home. I am a living proof of this. What I have done others can do." "You have excellent vocal teachers right here in America," says Mme. Hempel. Then she marvels, that with all these advantages at her door, there are not more American girls who make good. She lays it to the fact that our girls try to combine a social life with their musical studies, to the great detriment of the latter.

ARE AMERICAN VOCAL STUDENTS SUPERFICIAL?

It is doubtless a great temptation to the American girl who possesses a voice and good looks, who is a favorite socially, to neglect her studies at times, for social gaiety. She is in such haste to make something of herself, to get where she can earn a little with her voice; yet by yielding to other calls she defeats the very purpose for which she is striving by a lowered ideal of her art. Let us see how the artists and teachers view this state of things. Lehmann says:

"The trouble with American girls is they are always in a hurry. They are not content to sit down quietly and study till they have developed themselves into something before they ever think of coming to Europe. They think if

they can only come over here and sing for an artist, that fact alone will give them prestige in America. With us American girls are too often looked upon as superficial because they come over here quite unprepared. I say to them: Go home and study; there are plenty of good teachers of voice and piano in your own land. Then, when you can *sing,* come here if you wish."

Frieda Hempel speaks from close observation when she says: "Here in America, girls do not realize the amount of labor and sacrifice involved, or they might not be so eager to enter upon a musical career. They are too much taken up with teas, parties, and social functions to have sufficient time to devote to vocal study and to all that goes with it. In order to study all the subjects required, the girl with a voice must be willing to give most of her day to work. This means sacrificing the social side, and being willing to throw herself heart and soul into the business of adequately preparing herself for her career."

THE VOCAL STUDENT MUST NOT BE AFRAID TO WORK

In the words of Caruso's message to vocal students, they must be willing "to work—to

work always—and to sacrifice." But Geraldine Farrar does not consider this in the light of sacrifice. Her message to the young singer is:

"Stick to your work and study systematically, whole-heartedly. If you do not love your work enough to give it your best thought, to make sacrifices for it, then there is something wrong with you. Better choose some other line of work, to which you can give undivided attention and devotion. For music requires both. As for sacrifices, they really do not exist, if they promote the thing you honestly love most. You must never stop studying, for there is always so much to learn." "I have developed my voice through arduous toil," to quote Mme. Galli-Curci. Raisa says: "One cannot expect to succeed in the profession of music without giving one's best time and thought to the work of vocal training and all the other subjects that go with it. A man in business gives his day, or the most of it, to his office. My time is devoted to my art, and indeed I have not any too much time to study all the necessary sides of it."

"I am always studying, always striving to improve what I have already learned and trying to acquire the things I find difficult, or

have not yet attained to," testifies Mme. Homer.

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A VOCAL CAREER

Those who have been through the necessary drudgery and struggle and have won out, should be able to give an authoritative answer to this all important question. They know what they started with, what any singer must possess at the beginning, and what she must acquire.

Naturally the singer must have a voice, for there is no use trying to cultivate something which does not exist. All artists subscribe to this. They also affirm she should have good looks, a love for music and a musical nature. Let us hear from Mme. Homer on this subject.

"1. Voice, first of all. 2. Intelligence; for intelligence controls, directs, shines through and illumines everything. What can be done without it? 3. Musical nature. 4. Capacity for Work. Without application, the gifts of voice, intelligence and a musical nature will not make an artist. 5. A cheerful optimism, which refuses to yield to discouragement. 6. Patience. It is only with patient striving, doing the daily vocal task, and trying to do it each day a little better than the day before, that any-

thing worth while is accomplished. The student must have unlimited patience to labor and wait for results."

Mr. Witherspoon states, that students coming to him must possess "Voice, to begin with; youth, good looks, musical intelligence and application. If the candidate possess these requisites, we begin to work." Anna Case answers the question as to the vital requisites necessary to become a singer: "Brains, Personality, Voice."

Quotations could be multiplied to prove that all artists fully concur with those already mentioned. There must be a promising voice to cultivate, youth, good looks, (for a public career) and the utmost devotion to work.

WHAT BRANCHES OF STUDY MUST BE TAKEN UP?

All agree there are many other subjects to study besides singing; that alone is far from sufficient. Edward Johnson says: "Singing itself is only a part, perhaps the smaller part of one's equipment. If opera be the goal, there are languages, acting, make up, impersonation, interpretation, how to walk, all to be added to piano, harmony and languages. The most important of all is a musical education."

Most of the great singers have emphatically

expressed themselves in favor of piano study. Indeed, many were pianists in the beginning, before they began to develop the voice. Among those who had this training are: Galli-Curci, Lehmann, Raisa, D'Alvarez, Barrientos, Braslau, Case. Miss Braslau says: "I am so grateful for my knowledge of the piano and its literature; it is the greatest help to me now. To my thinking all children should have piano lessons; the cost is trifling compared with the benefits they receive. They should be made to study, whether they wish it or not, for they do not know what is best for them."

Mme. Raisa says: "There are so many sides to the singer's equipment besides singing itself. The piano is a necessity; the singer is greatly handicapped without a knowledge of that instrument, for it not only provides accompaniment but cultivates musical sense." "The vocal student should study piano as well as languages," asserts Mme. Homer; "both are the essentials. Not that she need strive to become a pianist; that would not be possible if she is destined to be a singer. But the more she knows of the piano and its literature, the more this will cultivate her musical sense and develop her taste."

Florence Easton is even more emphatic. "If a girl is fond of music, let her first study the piano, for a knowledge of the piano and its music is at the bottom of everything. All children should have this opportunity, whether they desire it or not. The child who early begins to study piano, will often unconsciously follow the melody with her voice. Thus the love of song is awakened in her, and a little later it is discovered she has a voice worth cultivating."

On the subject of languages, artists are equally specific. Languages are an absolute necessity, beginning with one's mother tongue. The student should not imagine that because he is born to the English language, it does not require careful study. Galli-Curci remarks: "The singer can always be considered fortunate who has been brought up to more than one language. I learned Spanish and Italian at home. In school I learned French, German and English, not only a little smattering of each, but how to write and speak them."

Rosa Raisa speaks eight languages, according to her personal statement. Russian, of course, as she is Russian, then French, Italian, German, Spanish, Polish, Roumanian and English.

"The duty is laid upon Americans to study other languages, if they expect to sing," says Florence Easton. "I know how often this study is neglected by the student. It is only another phase of that haste which is characteristic of the young student and singer."

BREATH CONTROL

Following the subject of requirements for a vocal career, let us get right down to the technical side, and review the ideas of artists on Breath Control, How to Practice, What are the Necessary Exercises, What Vowels Should be Used, and so on.

All admit that the subject of Breath Control is perhaps the most important of all. Lehmann says: "I practice many breathing exercises without using tone. Breath becomes voice through effort of will and by use of vocal organs. When singing, emit the smallest quantity of breath. Vocal chords are breath regulators; relieve them of all overwork."

Mme. Galli-Curci remarks: "Perhaps, in vocal mastery, the greatest factor of all is the breathing. To control the breath is what each student is striving to learn, what every singer endeavors to perfect, what every artist should master. It is an almost endless study and an

individual one, because each organism and mentality is different."

Marguerite d'Alvarez: "In handling and training the voice, breathing is perhaps the most vital thing to be considered. To some breath control seems second nature; others must toil for it. With me it is intuition. Breathing is such an individual thing. With each person it is different, for no two people breathe in just the same way."

Claudia Muzio: "Every singer knows how important is the management of breath. I always hold up the chest, taking as deep breaths as I can conveniently. The power to hold the breath and sing more and more tones with one breath, grows with careful, intelligent practice."

Frieda Hempel: "The very first thing for a singer to consider is breath control—always the breathing, the breathing. She thinks of it morning, noon and night. Even before rising in the morning she has it on her mind, and may do a few little stunts while still reclining. Then, before beginning vocal technic in the morning, she goes through a series of breathing exercises."

David Bispham: "Correct breath control must be carefully studied and is the result of

understanding and experience. When the manner of taking breath and the way to develop the diaphragm and abdominal muscles, is understood, that is only a beginning. Management of the breath is an art in itself. The singer must know what to do with the breath once he has taken it in, or he may let it out in quarts when he opens his mouth. He learns how much he needs for each phrase; he learns how to conserve the breath."

Oscar Saenger: "The management of the breath is a most important factor, as the life of the tone depends on a continuance of the breath. The student must cultivate the power of quickly inhaling a full breath, and exhaling it so gradually that she can sing a phrase lasting from ten to twenty seconds. This needs months of arduous practice. In all breathing, inhale through the nose."

Yeatman Griffith: "Breath control is indeed a vital need, but should not be made a bugbear to be greatly feared. Most students make breathing and breath control a difficult matter, when it should be a natural and easy act. They do not need the large amount of breath they imagine they do, for a much smaller quantity will suffice. When you open the lips after a full, natural breath, do not let

the breath escape; the vocal chords will make the tone, if you understand how to make a perfect start."

SPECIFIC EXERCISES

Great singers are chary of giving out vocal exercises which they have discovered, evolved, or have used so constantly as to consider them a part of their own personal equipment, for reasons stated earlier in this chapter. However, a few artists have indicated certain forms which they use. Mme. d'Alvarez remarks: "When I begin to study in the morning, I give the voice what I call a massage. This consists of humming exercises, with closed lips. Humming is the sunshine of the voice. One exercise is a short figure of four consecutive notes of the diatonic scale, ascending and descending several times; on each repetition of the group of phrases, the new set begins on the next higher note of the scale. This exercise brings the tone fully forward."

Lehmann counsels the young voice to begin in the middle and work both ways. Begin single tones piano, make a long crescendo and return to piano. Another exercise employs two connecting half tones, using one or two vowels. During practice stand before a mirror.

Raisa assures us she works at technic every day. "Vocalizes, scales, broken thirds, long, slow tones in mezza di voce—that is beginning softly, swelling to loud, then diminuendo to soft, are part of the daily régime." Farrar works on scales and single tones daily. Muzio says: "I sing all the scales, one octave each, once slow and once fast—all in one breath. Then I sing triplets on each tone, as many as I can in one breath. Another exercise is to take one tone softly, then go to the octave above; this tone is always sung softly, but there is a large crescendo between the two soft tones." Kingston says: "As for technical material, I have never used a great quantity. I do scales and vocalizes each day. I also make daily use of about a dozen exercises by Rubini. Beyond these I make technical exercises out of the pieces." De Luca sings scales in full power, then each tone alone, softly, then swelling to full strength and dying away. Bispham: "I give many vocalizes and exercises, which I invent to fit the need of each student. They are not written down, simply remembered. I also make exercises out of familiar tunes or themes from opera. Thus, while the student is studying technic, he is acquiring much beautiful material."

Oscar Saenger: "We begin by uniting two tones smoothly and evenly, then three in the same way; afterwards four and five. Then the scale of one octave. Arpeggios are also most important. The trill is the most difficult of all vocal exercises. We begin with quarter notes, then eighths and sixteenths. The trill is taken on each tone of the voice, in major seconds." Werrenrath: "I do a lot of gymnastics each day, to exercise the voice and limber up the anatomy. These act as a massage for the voice; they are in the nature of humming, mingled with grunts, calls, exclamations, shouts, and many kinds of sounds. They put the voice in condition, so there is no need for all these other exercises which most singers find so essential to their vocal well being."

Duval asserts: "Long, sustained tones are too difficult for the young voice. One should sing medium fast scales at first."

LENGTH OF TIME FOR DAILY PRACTICE

It may be helpful to know about how much time the artists devote to daily study, especially to technical practice. It is understood all great singers work on vocalizes and technical material daily.

Caruso is a constant worker. Two or three

hours in the forenoon, and several more later in the day, whenever possible. Farrar devotes between one and two hours daily to vocalizes, scales and tone study, Lehmann counsels one hour daily on technic. Galli-Curci gives a half hour or so to vocalizes and scales every morning. Martinelli practices exercises and vocalizes one hour each morning; then another hour on repertoire. In the afternoon an hour more —three hours daily. Easton says: "It seems to me a young singer should not practice more than an hour a day, at most, beginning with two periods of fifteen or twenty minutes each." Anna Case says: "I never practice when I am tired, for then it does more harm than good. One must be in good condition to make good tones. I can study and not sing at all, for the work is all mental anyway." Muzio states she gives practically her whole day to study, dividing it into short periods, with rest between.

Frieda Hempel says: "I do about two hours or more, though not all of this for technic. I approve of a good deal of technical study, taken in small doses of ten to fifteen minutes at a time. Technic is a means to an end, more in the art of song than in almost any other form of art. Technic is the background of expressive singing."

Sophie Braslau is an incessant worker,—"at least six hours a day. Of these I actually sing three hours. The first hour to memory work on repertoire. The second hour to vocalizes. The rest of the time is given to repertoire and the things that belong to it." Barrientos states she gives about three-quarters of an hour to vocal technic—scales and exercises—each day. Duval advises the young student to practice two half hours daily, two hours after eating, and rest the voice one day each week, during which she studies other subjects connected with her art. Oscar Saenger says: "One should practice in fifteen-minute periods, and rest at least ten minutes between. Sing only two hours a day, one in the morning and one in afternoon."

WHAT VOWELS TO USE

There seems a divergence of opinion as to what vowels are most beneficial in technical practice and study. Galli-Curci says: "In my own study I use them all, though some are more valuable than others. The Ah is the most difficult of all. The O is good; E needs great care. I have found the best way is to use mixed vowels, one melting into the other. The tone can be started with each vowel in

turn, then mingled with the rest of the vowels." Mme. d'Alvarez often starts the tone with Ah, which melts into O and later changes to U, as the tone dies away. Bispham has the student use various vowel syllables, as: Lah, Mah, May, and Mi. With Oscar Saenger the pupil in early stages at least, uses Ah for vocalizes. Duval requires students to use the vowel Ah, for exercises and scales, finding the others are not needed, especially excluding E and U as injurious. Griffith uses each vowel in turn, preceded by all the consonants of the alphabet, one after another.

HALF OR FULL VOICE?

Shall the young singer practice with half or full voice seems a matter depending on one's individual attainments. De Luca uses full power during practice, while Raisa sings softly, or with medium tone, during study hours, except occasionally when she wishes to try out certain effects. Martinelli states he always practices with full voice, as with half voice he would not derive the needed benefit. Mme. Easton admits she does not, as a rule, use full voice when at work; but adds, this admission might prove injurious to the young singer, for half voice might result in faulty tone produc-

tion. Anna Case says when at work on a song in her music room, she sings it with the same power as she would before an audience. She has not two ways of doing it, one for a small room and another for a large one. Mr. Duval advises the young pupil to sing tones as loudly and deeply as possible. Singing pianissimo is another fallacy for a young voice. This is one of the most difficult accomplishments, and should be reserved for a later period. Oscar Saenger: "The tone should be free, round and full, but not loud."

HEARING YOURSELF

Does the singer really hear himself is a question which has been put to nearly every artist. Many answered in a comparative negative, though with qualifications. Miss Farrar said:

"No, I do not actually hear my voice, except in a general way, but we learn to know the sensations produced in throat, head, face, lips and other parts of the anatomy, which vibrate in a certain manner to correct tone production. We learn the *feeling* of the tone." "I can tell just how I am singing a tone or phrase," says De Luca, "by the feeling and sensation; for of course I cannot hear the full effect; no singer can really hear the effect of his work, except on

the records." "The singer must judge so much from sensation, for she cannot very well hear herself, that is, she cannot tell the full effect of what she is doing," says Anna Case. Mr. Witherspoon says: "The singer of course hears himself and with study learns to hear himself better. The singer should depend more on hearing the sound he makes than on feeling the sound. In other words, train the *ear,* the court of ultimate resort, and the only judge, and forget sensation as much as possible, for the latter leads to a million confusions."

VOCAL MASTERY, FROM THE ARTISTS' VIEWPOINT

Farrar: "A thing that is mastered must be really perfect. To master vocal art, the singer must have so developed his voice that it is under complete control; then he can do with it what he wishes. He must be able to produce all he desires of power, pianissimo, accent, shading, delicacy and variety of color."

Galli-Curci: "To sum up: the three requirements of vocal mastery are: Management of the Larynx; Relaxation of the Diaphragm; Control of the Breath. To these might be added a fourth: Mixed Vowels. But when these are mastered, what then? Ah,

so much more it can never be put into words. It is self-expression through the medium of tone, for tone must always be a vital part of the singer's individuality, colored by feeling and emotion. To perfect one's own instrument, must always be the singer's joy and satisfaction."

Raisa: "If I have developed perfect control throughout the two and a half octaves of my voice, can make each tone with pure quality and perfect evenness in the different degrees of loud and soft, and if I have perfect breath control as well, I then have an equipment that may serve all purposes of interpretation. For together with vocal mastery must go the art of interpretation, in which all the mastery of the vocal equipment may find expression. In order to interpret adequately one ought to possess a perfect instrument, perfectly trained. When this is the case one can forget mechanism, because confident of the ability to express any desired emotion."

Homer: "The singer must master all difficulties of technic, of tone production in order to be able to express the thought of the composer, and the meaning of the music."

Werrenrath: "I can answer the question in one word—Disregard. For if you have com-

plete control of your anatomy and such command of your vocal resources that they will always do their work; that they can be depended on to act perfectly, then you can disregard mechanism and think only of the interpretation —only of your vocal message. Then you have conquered the material and have attained Vocal Mastery."

Kingston: "Vocal Mastery includes so many things. First and foremost, vocal technic. One must have an excellent technic before one can hope to sing even moderately well. Technic furnishes the tool with which the singer creates his vocal art work. Then the singer must work on his moral nature so that he shall express the beautiful and pure in music. Until I have thus prepared myself, I am not doing my whole duty to myself, my art or to my neighbor."

Griffith: "Vocal Mastery is acquired through correct understanding of what constitutes pure vowel sounds, and such control of the breath as will enable one to convert every atom of breath into singing tone. This establishes correct action of the vocal chords and puts the singer in possession of the various tints of the voice.

"When the vocal chords are allowed to pro-

duce pure vowels, correct action is the result, and with proper breath support, Vocal Mastery can be assured."

Duval: "What is Vocal Mastery? Every great artist has his own peculiar manner of accomplishing results—has his own vocal mastery. Patti had one kind, Maurel another, Lehmann still another. Caruso may also be said to have his own vocal mastery.

"In fine, as every great artist is different from his compeers, there can be no fixed and fast standard of vocal mastery, except the mastery of doing a great thing greatly and convincingly."

THE END